



Namdhari Sikhs

A Brief History

Tara Singh Anjan



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NAMDHARI SIKHS

(upto 2012 A.D.)



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Original in Punjabi
Tara Singh Anjan

English Translation
Anjan Saggu

Editor
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*Dedicated
To
His Holiness
Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji*

Retrospection : A New Historical Fact

S. Tara Singh Anjan is an established authentic writer of Namdhari History. For the last three decades, he has been continuously engaged in a purposeful scrutiny and giving recognition to Namdhari Movement through his numerous writings.

The present book is a rare presentation in this chain. Namdhari Sikhs - A Brief History gives a vivid description based on historical facts and the truth about Satguru Ram Singh and his traditions. The writer has also presented the traditions in the Sikh History factually and faithfully. Anjan has beautifully portrayed the unique contribution of the Namdhari Movement in the country's independence struggle. The detailed account of Maharaja Ranjit Singh's era presented by him makes it easy to understand the background of this Movement. The change brought by Maharaja Ranjit Singh's 'Khalsa Raj' considered as blessings, has been beautifully analyzed in the present book in the context of its racial nature and groupism. This monograph is all the more significant for its analysis and evaluation of the speed at which the Namdhari Organization made the First Revolution of 1857 as part of its thinking and the Namdhari followers as part of its influences. How the Namdhari Organization was able to evolve a centralized system of its existence is also beautifully presented in this book. The portrayal of the role played by the Namdhari Sikhs in attaining independence is significant from the historical perspective.

The war of India's independence which the Indian historians link to the image of Gandhiji, in fact he had its source of inspiration in the Namdhari Movement. These contributions of the Namdhari Movement should be simplified and understood

in the globalization process and the historians should not jump to the conclusion in haste. In fact, this book also describes that contribution of the entire Punjab which is apparently withering away from the Indian history. Namdhari Movement is a glowing ray in the history of Punjab whose contributions need to be seen in many perspectives.

Anjan has also presented the splendid personality of Satguru Ram Singh in many perspectives. These perspectives are social, political, religious and cultural. Satguru's call for an end to foetus killings, his insistence on learning Punjabi language, marriage of girl child without dowry, the awakening for the Swadeshi Movement and the running of a parallel postal service are some of the facts which this book portrays transparently. Anjan has been greatly successful in reaching out this campaign of the Namdhari Movement to the doorstep of the common man.

The second bigger part of this book reflects clearly the contributions of the Namdhari Sikhs in post independence India which shows the ever increasing participation of this Organization in the achievements in agriculture, sports, music, culture and literature which are directly connected to the pride of the nation. The Namdhari Organisation worked tirelessly day in and out in the rehabilitation of the Punjabis after 15th August 1947 and taught them a new way of living. The contributions of Satguru Ram Singh in this context could never be forgotten. Sri Satguru ji played a revolutionary role in getting shelter and lands to the displaced refugee farmers from Pakistan.

The simple living, eating habits and the parameters for leading a pure life by the Namdhari Sikhs give rise to a code of conduct by following which one can live in spiritual peace even in today's materialistic world. Namdhari Sikhs are basically peace loving Indian nationals. They play a leading role in nation building. The Namdhari thinking is now on the

track to grapple with new problems of the country. Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh ji graced the opening of the eight storeyed Satguru Pratap Singh Apollo Hospital for the patients on the occasion of Hola Mohalla in 2005 in Ludhiana (Punjab) which is having all modern amenities under the management of Thakur Udai Singh. This grand hospital was inaugurated by the Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh on 23rd September, 2005 in the holy presence of the Sri Satguru ji.

In the words of Tara Singh Anjan, because of the wholistic idealism of the Namdhari Movement, the Namdhari Sikhs have been able to carve out a special place for themselves in different walks of life. While they were ever ready to make any sacrifice in the struggle for country's independence during the 90 years period before 1947, they have been utilizing their skills in rehabilitation, organization, expansion and higher achievements after independence. Sri Satguru ji has always remained the source of inspiration. His Holiness always led him in his way of life and graciously helps him to overcome difficulties. As a result of this, Anjan is able to write the Namdhari History in golden words.

S. Tara Singh Anjan has brought to the fore, through his writings, the glowing Organisation of the twentieth century whose shining contribution has today presented the Indian history, traditions and inheritance in a new perspective. He is not merely worthy of praise but deserves our felicitations.

Dr. Harmohinder Singh Bedi
Professor
Guru Nanak Dev University
Amritsar
Baisakhi 2009

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GURU-SIKH TRADITION

The Namdhari Sikhs are the true followers of the Sikh Satguru Sahib. The Guru-Sikh relationship is as old as the process of teaching and learning. The urge to learn has existed in man since times immemorial. Therefore to acquire knowledge and wisdom, the Guru comes to the fold of the Satguru. Sikh word itself is the changed form of Shishya from *Sanskrit*, *Pali*, *Apbhransh* and *Prakritak* languages.

The word Sikh has become the synonym of Sikh religion. Infact, Sikh religion is a set of commandments of *Maryada*, a code of conduct, evolved and preached by Guru Nanak Dev and his successors. It has a glorious history, dating back to five centuries. Sri Adi Granth Sahib and Sri Dasam Granth Sahib are their religious scriptures. The first Granth was compiled by fifth Guru, Sri Guru Arjan Dev and is known as Sri Adi Granth Sahib. The Second Granth was the creation of Tenth Guru, Sri Guru Gobind Singh. It is known as Sri Dasam Granth Sahib. The poetic compilation in the two Granths is Guru's Bani. The holy poetic flow of these *Banis* is recited, sung, read, contemplated and followed with utmost sanctity, reverence, honour and purity. The Namdhari Sikhs are commanded by the Sri Satguru ji to follow the code of conduct based on *Bani*.

According to *Bani*, all divine lords had been appearing

in human form from time to time to guide and bless the errant human beings to lead a virtuous living. This tradition has been there for four ages, called Yugas: Satyug, Treta, Dwapar and Kalyug and is still continuing. The appearance of Sikh Gurus manifested the same tradition:

In the Satyug, oh Lord you were all pervasive and overpowered all vices,

In the Treta-Yuga, You came as Lord Ram Raghuvanshi,

In the Dwapar Yuga, as Krishana Murari You salvaged Kans,

Ugrasen was given the kingdom and blessed with the worship of the Lord,

In the Kalyug, Guru Nanak and Guru Angad became immortal,

The primeval divine ordained that the the holy Guru will be eternal.

-Sri Adi Granth Sahib

ਸਤਜੁਗਿ ਤੈ ਮਾਣਿਓ ਛਲਿਓ ਬਲਿ ਬਾਵਨ ਭਾਇਓ।।
ਤ੍ਰੇਤੈ ਤੈ ਮਾਣਿਓ ਰਾਮੁ ਰਘੁਵੰਸੁ ਕਹਾਇਓ।।
ਦੁਆਪੁਰਿ ਕ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਨ ਮੁਰਾਰਿ ਕੰਸੁ ਕਿਰਤਾਰਥੁ ਕੀਓ।।
ਉਗ੍ਰਸੈਣ ਕਉ ਰਾਜੁ ਅਭੈ ਭਗਤਹ ਜਨ ਦੀਓ।।
ਕਲਿਜੁਗਿ ਪ੍ਰਮਾਣੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਗੁਰੁ ਅੰਗਦੁ ਅਮਰੁ ਕਹਾਇਓ।।
ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੁ ਰਾਜੁ ਅਬਿਚਲੁ ਅਟਲੁ ਆਦਿ ਪੁਰਖਿ ਫੁਰਮਾਇਓ।।

The aim of this spiritual tradition had been to connect mankind with the Almighty- Lord and the Guru. As per Guru Gobind Singh, a number of *Pirs*, self-proclaimed messengers of the God, demigods (*DEV I- DEVTAS*) had come to this world. Instead of worshipping the Almighty, they professed to be all powerful and got themselves worshipped by the people.

Guru Gobind Singh preached spiritualism and in his verses Guru Nanak Dev's lineage goes back to Raghuvanshi Lord Rama.

We find its reference in Bachittar Natak, *Bani* of Guru Gobind Singh, that Raghu was the ancestor of Surya clan. His son was the great archer Aj and Aj's son was Dashrath who had four princes. Lord Rama was the eldest. Two princes of Rama were Luv and Kush, who got built Lahore and Kasur cities (Both in Pakistan). Subsequently, the Sodhis and Bedis originated from them. The Sodhis ruled this area while Bedis went to Kashi (Benaras) and became expert in reciting the *Vedas* :

Nanak Rai was born in the Bedi clan

He helped all and gave comforts to the Sikhs

ਤਿਨ ਬੇਦੀਯਨ ਕੀ ਕੁਲ ਬਿਖੇ ਪ੍ਰਗਟੇ ਨਾਨਕ ਰਾਇ।।

ਸਭ ਸਿਖਨ ਕੋ ਸੁਖ ਦੇਏ ਜਹ ਤਹ ਭਏ ਸਹਾਇ।।

-Bachitar Natak

Bedis returned to homeland, Punjab at the invitation of the Sodhi emperor. They recited three *Vedas* viz. *Rigved*, *Samveda* and *Yajurveda* meticulously for the Sodhi emperor. When fourth *Veda*, *Atharva Veda*, was recited, he got so impressed that he handed over the reigns of the kingdom to them and went away to Benaras. However, before his departure the Sodhi emperor forecast that Nanak would appear as the saviour in the Kalyug. Nanak Rai would take birth in the families of these Bedi's and would take care of his Sikhs where ever they shall be.

You heard recitation from the three Vedas

At the recitation from the fourth Veda, you handed over

the reigns

Oh lord, we had taken three births

We accept you as our Satguru in the fourth birth.

ਤ੍ਰਿਤਿਯ ਬੇਦ ਸੁਨਬੇ ਤੁਮ ਕੀਆ।।

ਚਤਰ ਬੇਦੁ ਸੁਨਿ ਭੂਅ ਕੇ ਦੀਆ।।

ਤੀਨ ਜਨਮ ਹਮਾਹੂੰ ਜਬ ਧਰਿਹ।।

ਚੌਥੇ ਜਨਮ ਗੁਰੂ ਤੇਹਿ ਕਰਿ ਹੈ।।

-Bachitar Natak

Guru Nanak Dev realised in his life time (1469 to 1539) that mankind had forgotten the spiritual and human values. A king did not perform his duties and people were totally ignorant. They were like a blind person without knowledge. Those who could awaken the public had either become stooges of the rulers or had gone to the mountains for meditation. Their vision was narrow and the intelligentsia and the powerful were in collusion with the rulers. Preachers (*pundits*) were deceits: aped their rulers in terms of dress (blue) and behaviour: read the scriptures of foreigners and accepted ill-gotten money for rendering such services.

Turks and the Pathans aped the rulers wearing blue dresses

They were accepted on the side of the rulers

The barbarians posed as worshipers of the Puranas.

The Khatris abjured their religion and barbarians reigned supreme

ਨੀਲ ਬਸਤ੍ਰ ਲੇ ਕਪੜੇ ਪਹਿਰੇ।

ਤੁਰਕ ਪਠਾਣੀ ਅਮਲੁ ਕੀਆ।।

ਮਹਲਾ 1

ਨੀਲ ਵਸਤ੍ਰ ਪਹਿਰਿ ਹੋਵਹਿ ਪਰਵਾਣੁ।।

ਮਲੇਛ ਧਾਨ ਲੇ ਪੂਜਹਿ ਪੁਰਾਣੁ।।

ਮਹਲਾ 1

The *Pundits* were apparently custodians of the Indian culture and heritage but they followed the western scriptures in their religious performances. They followed the four foreign scriptures (*Kateb*) – Torat, Jambur, Bible (Injil) and Quran instead of the four Vedas.

Guru Nanak Dev undertook religious pilgrimages (*Udasis*) to guide people of this earth. He composed and recited *Gurbani*. He performed deep meditation and preached *Naam-Simran* (meditation), Bani recitation and sharing wealth (*Vand Chhakna*). He highlighted the importance of family life. Guru Nank Dev imparted wisdom to the ignorant people. He had discourses with the intelligentsia and philosophers. He raised his voice against the tyrant rulers who oppressed the poor. He preached the mankind to eat pure vegetarian food and lead a simple living in order to maintain high morals. He prohibited eating meat, fish etc. He forbade drinking liquor and using drugs. He preached to make pious earnings instead of sinful and immoral earnings. He preached and propagated about respecting women in society, to rise above castism and to be kind to the poor. He preached the greatness of the Guru and to always praise the *Akal- Purakh* (Almighty). He wrote in *Bani*....

*I am committed to the true Guru,
by meeting whom, the Lord is kept in the mind
who preached and awakened the mankind
and blessed the eiture world
(so that) by these (my) eyes, the world is beheld.*

—Mohalla 1

ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਵੀਟਹੁ ਵਾਰਿਆ
ਜਿਤੁ ਮਿਲਿਐ ਖਸਮੁ ਸਮਾਲਿਆ।।
ਜਿਨਿ ਕਰਿ ਉਪਦੇਸੁ ਗਿਆਨ ਅੰਜਨੁ ਦੀਆ

ਇਨੀ ਨੇਤ੍ਰੀ ਜਗਤੁ ਨਿਹਾਲਿਆ।

-ਮਹਲਾ 1

Satguru's grace must always be bestowed on the Sikhs. Keeping this need in mind, he ordained:

Only capable can sit on the throne

ਤਖਤਿ ਬਹੈ ਤਖਤੈ ਕੀ ਲਾਇਕ।।

-ਮਹਲਾ 1

He (Guru Nanak Dev) enthroned Bhai Lehna as his successor and left for his heavenly abode. Bhai Lehna (Guru Angad Dev) in turn handed over *Gurgaddi* (spiritual kingdom) to Guru Amardas. Guru Amardas considered Bhai Jetha as the ablest among the entire *sangat* and handed over the authority of Sikh religion to him and he was named as Guru Ramdas. From there onward, this seat came to the Sodhi clan.

During this time two parallel seats of spiritual and temporal power were running: Baba's (Guru Sahiban) and Babar's i.e., Mughal Empire. Satguru's *gaddi* propagated among the Sikhs spiritual purity, human values, social reforms and imbibing virtuosity, whereas, the Mughals enforced political supremacy. Although Emperor Akbar showed respect to Guru's langar (community kitchen) and is known to have taken food from it, yet religious authority was the eye sore for the state power. This smouldering feeling lit up into a flame during the time of Guru Arjan Dev.

After being coronated as the fifth Sikh Guru, he created historical documents and compiled *Bani* of the different sects of Hindus and Muslims, *Saints*, *Bhagats*, *Gursikhs* and *Bhats* along with the *Bani* of *Satguru Sahiban*, and edited it to give it the form of the Holy Book called by the disciples as *Sri Adi Granth Sahib*. Different writers named it as *Pothi Sahib*, *Soochi Prati*, *Giranth Ji*, *Granth Ji*, *Granth Sahib*. Devotees

worship it as Adi Sri Guru Granth Sahib.

Emperor Jahangir arrested Guru Arjan Dev because of his growing influence of Sikhism and poisoning of his ears by his orthodox courtiers. On his orders, Guru Arjan Dev was tortured, made to sit on the hot iron plate and hot sand was poured on his head. He sacrificed his life in 1606.

The next Guru of the Sikh panth, Guru Hargobind Sahib wore two swords, one of Miri and the other of Piri (symbolising religion and politics). He maintained army and adopted life style of warriors. The valiant Guru had unified gallantry and spirituality.

The preaching of Sikh faith slowed down during the time of the seventh and eighth preceptors, Guru Har Rai and Guru Harikrishan but during the time of Guru Teg Bahadur, Satguru's tolerance and Aurangzeb's tyranny clashed. Sri Satguru Ji sacrificed his life along with many of his disciples to save the Hindu religion.

As soon as (Guru) Teg Bahadur left for his heavenly abode

*The entire world was engulfed in grief.
Cries of distress were heard all around
Whereas the heavens
reverbrated with ovation and applause.*

-Bachitar Natak

ਤੇਗ ਬਹਾਦਰ ਕੇ ਚਲਤ ਭਯੋ ਜਗਤ ਕੇ ਸੋਕ
ਹੈ ਹੈ ਹੈ ਸਭ ਜਗ ਭਯੋ ਜੈ ਜੈ ਜੈ ਸੁਰ ਲੇਕ।।

Guru Gobind Singh was enthroned on the *Gaddi*. He was the tenth guru. He had to fight many wars in his time in which Hindus and Muslims equally fought bravely from his side. He composed his *Bani* at Paonta Sahib, which was in

Braj, Punjabi and Persian languages. He gave a new recognition to the Sikhs and created Khalsa Panth on 30th March, 1699 – Baisakhi Day. Guru Gobind Singh asked the Khalsa to stand up for righteousness, against repression and tyranny and preached not to discriminate between human beings and to meditate God's (Akal Purakh's) Name. His four sons- Sahibzadas Ajit Singh, Jujhar Singh, Jorawar Singh and Fateh Singh sacrificed their lives for the sake of religion and justice. To exterminate the tyrant ruler, he himself went to far off place Nander (Maharashtra). From there too, he disappeared in 1708 incognito and spent a long time in Rajasthan and Punjab in disguise. There after handing over spiritual throne (Gurgaddi) to Guru Balak Singh, he left for his heavenly abode in 1869 Bikrami (1812 AD). The references to this are available in the writings of Sikh historians viz. Kavi Sukha Singh (Guru Bilas), Bhai Santokh Singh (Guru Pratap Suraj), Giani Gian Singh (Sri Guru Panth Prakash), Mahant Sumer Singh (Guru Bilas), Kavi Sainapati (Guru Sobha), Bhai Kahan Singh Nabha (Itihas de Anlikhei Patrey).

Guru Gobind Singh told Guru Balak Singh while handing over *Gurgaddi*, "I would take it back In my next re-embodiment."

*Nevertheless the Tenth Master appeared in person
Ram Singh is my incarnation partaking of an element
of mine.*

*I have, therefore, entrusted him with my authority and
none else*

The master's message was loud and clear.

ਐਧੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਦਸਮ ਦਰਸ ਦੈ ਜੋ ਕਹਯੋ ਤਾਂਹਿ

ਮੇਰੇ ਅਵਤਾਰ ਅੰਸ ਰਾਮ ਸਿੰਘ ਹੋਵੇ ਭਰੇ।
ਯਾਹਿ ਹੇਤ ਤਾਹਿ ਨਾਹਿ ਔਰ ਕਾਹਿ ਮਾਹਿ
ਨਿਜ ਸਕਤਿ ਰਖਾਈ ਗੁਰਵਾਕ ਦਿਢ ਥੇ ਧਰੇ।

-Sri Guru Panth Prakash- Giani Gian Singh

The Guru whose identification is depicted in Gurbani and has been praised was a living guru. The Tenth Guru, like the earlier Gurus, blessed Guru Balak Singh, a living guru as his successor. Namdhari Sikhs are the followers of this Guru-Sikh tradition and are greatly obliged to their Satguru. They follow their Satguru and feel blessed by being in his order.



FIRST STEP TO INDEPENDENCE

The tenth Master-Guru Gobind Singh went into hiding on his own discretion under a political strategy. He gave a new life to ascetic and sage Madho Das by instilling the zeal to stand up against tyranny and repression. Madho Das, known as Banda Bahadur fought valiantly. He took a revenge for execution of Sahibzadas from the Nawab of Sarhind in Punjab and killed him. He laid the foundation of Sikh empire in Punjab and issued coins in the name of Guru Nanak. Mughal Emperor Farrukhsiyar sent a big army, which defeated Banda Bahadur and the Sikh army and kept them besieged in Gurdas Nangal fortress for 8 months. Banda Bahadur was heavily chained and arrested along with his 740 starving warriors. They were taken to Delhi where they were executed in 1716, after severe torture. Even after that, Lahore's Subedar Zakria Khan hounded the Sikhs. Afghan invaders, and Nadirshah Ahmed Shah Abdali trampled Punjab and wanted to eliminate the Sikhs who indulged in guerrilla warfare. Sikhs started living in forests, always on the horse back so that they could respond quickly and protect themselves in times of distress. During this period, great wars were fought.

Punjab became increasingly weak because of Afghan invaders. Anarchy prevailed in the province. The Mughal Empire went on losing its hold. While standing up to tyranny

and repression, the Sikhs organized themselves into a strong army. They emerged as 12 armed groups-Missals. By 1799 Maharaja Ranjit Singh took over the reigns of the Sikh empire and formed a mighty Sikh army. In 1837, Guru Ram Singh was recruited in Maharaja Ranjit Singh's army. He was in the Kanwar Naunihal Singh platoon.

With the rise of political power of the Sikhs in Punjab, their virtuous decline started. The appearance of the Sikhs was intact but they forgot their theological principles and rituals i.e. the code of conduct of Sikhism. There was nobody to guide them to Naam Bani and teach them Punjabi. That was the reason that even those who had Sri Adi Granth Sahib and Sri Dasam Granth Sahib (Holy Sikh Scriptures) were unable to recite them. These scriptures were just stored in the almirahas and niches. These were being eaten up by either termites or rats. The Mahants, Priests, Sodhis, Bedis, Bawas etc. were getting themselves worshipped. Nobody gave good advice to even ordinary Sikhs. In the centres of religion, inebriate, lecherous, adulterer, hypocrites and cheats were misguiding the people. Giani Gian Singh, a renowned Sikh historian, has written about it in *Sri Guru Panth Prakash* :

They started eating meat and drinking liquor; started taking opium, poppy and cannabis. They disrespected kesh (hair) and indulged in petty crimes and stealing. But Sri Satguru Balak Singh saved Sikhism through his preachings and dignity of meditation. He preached the Sikhs in Hazro region. He was commanded by Guru Gobind Singh while handing over *Gurgaddi* to him to move incognito and was told that after his reincarnation as 12th embodiment, he would give a new form to Sikhism.

With the demise of Maharaja Ranjit Singh in 1839, the Sikh kingdom became weak. Due to treachery of Dogras and their burning desire to be the rulers of Punjab, kings, queens, princes, courtiers and ministers were eliminated one after the other. Among them were Chet Singh Bajwa, Maharaja Kharak Singh, Naunihal Singh, Maharani Chand Kaur, Maharaja Sher Singh, Kanwar Partap Singh, Kanwar Pishora Singh, Kanwar Tara Singh, Kanwar Kashmira Singh and Dhyan Singh Dogra himself, his brother Suchet Singh, son Hira Singh, Sandhawaliya Sardars etc. Anarchy prevailed all over the kingdom. Internal factionalism and hooliganism were on the rise. According to the data available, 36 emperors, kings, prime ministers, empresses, etc. were killed and finally in 1849, the Sikh kingdom was usurped by the British pretending to be saviours but acted as usurpers. Minor Prince Dalip Singh was enthroned only for name sake.

In 1841, the army marched towards Peshawar to collect government treasure, Satguru Ram Singh was part of the unit. The army brought the treasure up to the banks of Attock river. The people of that region were saved from excesses. They believed, it was due to the grace of Guru Balak Singh.

It was from there that Guru Ram Singh and 25 other soldiers went to Hazro to have a darshan (pious look) of Guru Balak Singh. As soon as, he looked at Satguru Ram Singh, by sheer clairvoyance, he recognised him as the 12th incarnation. He offered him 5 paise and coconut and handed over *Gurgaddi*. He said" Thakar Ji, take care of your safe deposit, set right the condition of the *panth* and spread the sunny rays of *Naam Simran* and meditation.

Sri Satguru Ji returned to Lahore as part of the army unit. Hooliganism and stabbing in the back of the near and

dear ones prevailing in the Sikh kingdom made Guru Ram Singh uneasy. He left the army in 1845 and came to Sri Bhaini Sahib (Dist.Ludhiana) and spent his time in meditation and contemplation. At that time, he was about 29 year old (Born in 1816 to father Jassa Singh and mother Sada Kaur at village Raiyan, district Ludhiana on the Basant Panchami day).

He lived at Sri Bhaini Sahib with parents, wife Mata Jassan, daughters Bibi Nanda, and Daya Kaur and family of younger brother Budh Singh. He opened a shop for honest earning. After taking bath from head to toe at dawn, he used to go to Akal Bunga situated outside the village and engross himself in meditation of God for hours together.

Patriotism nudged his thinking to find reasons for the fall of Sikh rule as Sikh kingdom was founded in 1799 and in the same year British East India Company had established its rule in Bengal. They came as merchants, but soon became rulers. The first ship of the British Company with William Howkins as its Captain docked at west coast of India at Surat on 24th August 1600. They sent an emissary Sir Thomas Row in the court of Emperor Jahangir and sought his permission to build a palace, which was subsequently built after 4 years. In the times to come, with due permission of the emperor, the company started trading in Bengal and spread its tentacles towards Hyderabad and Bombay and launched its own currency.

With prudence, cunningness and policy of divide and rule and noticing that the Mughal Empire was weakening, the British started capturing independent states. None could even stand up to their military power. They tried to annex Punjab also, but facing stiff resistance, out of necessity signed a treaty with Maharaja Ranjit Singh in 1809. They however

broke the treaty and captured Punjab. The Sikhs had to surrender and the British made the once powerful people as their henchmen by awarding them estates.

The Christian missionaries set up their headquarters in 1834 at Ludhiana and started converting the innocent and superstitious natives to Christianity.

By virtue of his experience and contemplation, Sri Satguru Ram Singh saw through the British cunningness. Sri Satguru Ji knew that armed struggle could not be fought against the British but at the same time he thought he could not become a silent spectator. He revived the Sikh code of conduct (*Maryada*) prescribed by Guru Gobind Singh. On 12th April, 1857 he founded *Namdhari Panth* by administering the nectar (*amrit of Khanda-Bata*) to 5 Pyaras (beloved). He unfurled the triangular white flag of freedom movement against the British rule. He commanded the Sikhs to get up before dawn, have bath from head to toe, meditate and recite *Naam* and recite the Holy Scriptures. For the betterment of women and to put an end to the evil practices which were widespread in the society, he prohibited killing or selling of girls, *Vatta* (marrying bride's brother to bridegroom's sister), dowry etc. He encouraged widow remarriage.

According to his political programme, he boycotted British institutions and goods. He preached complete boycott of foreign cloth, courts, postal system, education, jobs etc. and started non-cooperation movement and led the people on the path of *Swadeshi*. Encyclopaedia Britannica states that:

"(Guru) Ram Singh, a Sikh philosopher and reformer was the first Indian to use non-cooperation and boycott of the British merchandise and services as a political weapon."

Satguru Ram Singh's initiative for independence of the country reunited the patriots and instilled a new zeal among them.

NAMDHARI PANTH ON THE MOVE

Sri Satguru Ram Singh set up *Namdhari Panth* on 12th April, 1857 at Sri Bhaini Sahib, Punjab. In the same year on 10th May, rebellion broke out in Meerut army unit of the East India Company. It spread like a wild fire in the Indus-Ganga plains, Rajputana, Central India and Bengal. Its causes were the use of animal tallow, including cow fat in cartridges, denying royal rights to chiefs of some states and hatred among the people against the company rule and Christianity. Initially, the mutineers met with success. Bahadur Shah Zafar was again enthroned in Delhi but finally, the British crushed the revolt. Tanya Tope, Nana Faranvees, Rani Jhansi were defeated. Thousands of people were killed and Bahadur Shah Zafar was exiled to Rangoon (Burma) (Now Yangon Myanmar) as a state prisoner.

Indian historians have called this rebellion as the war of independence. The reasons for its failure were lack of organisation and army of Punjab and some other places and states being loyal to the British. After this, Indian administration directly came under the British government. Company's rule was taken over.

Since Sri Satguru Ji had himself served in the army, he thought of a political perspective in the new context. He started travelling to various places to infuse patriotism among the people to attract them to his political movement of non-

violence non-cooperation and *Swadeshi*. He had realised that the fellow countrymen did not have enough will power and had become weak on the spiritual front. The Punjabis had already been incapacitated. Satguru Ram Singh undertook tours for awakening the people. Wherever he went, he preached them to meditate *Naam Bani*, recite from Holy Scriptures, respect women, maintain purity and chastity and become self dependent. He exhorted the people to follow the discipline and the Code of Conduct preached by Guru Gobind Singh. He gave them rosary to count the beads for *Naam Simran*. He visited village after village, accompanied by *Keertani Jathas* (Gurbani reciters).

The people flocked to Sri Bhaini Sahib on hearing about Sri Satguru Ji. They were keen to know what the Guru was preaching. Impressed by the Sri Satguru Ji, they became his disciples. Bishanpura's landlord Mangal Singh was among them, who presented him very expensive white mare. Sri Satguru Ji was known as *Chini Wale Patshah*, as he rode on the white mare.

Baba Jawahar Singh Nirmala saint, Udasi saint Sahib Singh (Bangalipur) and scholar Rai Singh (Madeehar) also visited Bhaini Sahib for *Naam-Simran* and stayed back. As a result, Bhaini Sahib emerged as a big centre of meditation.

Sri Satguru Ji started tour from Muthada village in Jalandhar district and baptised village after village as Namdhari Sikhs. They became saints from debauches. At many places, he told the people that there was nothing to be worshiped at the graves and places of *pirs*, goddesses and *Khan Gahs*, which created superstitions.

Sri Satguru Ji went to Haridwar along with his disciples in 1861 on the occasion of Ardh-Kumbh (to take bath in the

holy Ganga waters after every six years). There also, Sri Satguru ji denounced the superstitions and asked the people to help the needy. He advised the hypocrite *mahants*, Naga Sadhus (sadhus who roamed about naked), *Nirmale* scholars, *Vedantis* and public in general to follow the righteous path. He gave discourses on spirituality and made disciples.

At Haridwar, the *sangat* could not pick up a burning heavy timber beam. Sri Satguru Ji himself and his younger brother Budh Singh picked it up from either side and put off fire by throwing it into the *Ganga* river waters. Here he made Sahib Kaur sit on burning pyre with her son and by his spiritual power did not let the heat affect them. Satguru ji celebrated Diwali of 1862 at Amritsar. He preached Sikhism and toured Majha, central part of Punjab. When Satguru Ji proceeded to Hazro, he received the news that Guru Balak Singh had left for his heavenly abode on 6th December, 1862. However, instead of going to Hazro, he preached Sikhism in Shahbad, Wazirabad, Sialkot, Naushahara areas.

By this time, government had come to know about his growing influence over the people. The Deputy Commissioners and Deputy Superintendents of Police of various districts of Punjab were sending reports about this development to Inspector General Police of Punjab state, which were forwarded to higher authorities.

According to a report of 12th June, 1863 from Attock district, six months after the death of Guru Balak Singh, the Sikhs of new sect had unanimously accepted Guru Ram Singh as the successor of Guru Balak Singh. Deputy Commissioner, Sialkot wrote that he had 5,000 Sikhs there, who did not accept the authority of anyone else as ruler.

According to Deputy Commissioner of Jalandhar, the Namdhari Sikhs were worshippers of embodied guru; got inspiration from Sri Adi Granth Sahib, tied round turban and held woollen rosary. Government was not only gathering information about Sri Satguru Ji and his followers but also watched their activities closely.

The impact of Sri Satguru Ji's tours and discourses went on increasing. On the full moon day of Jeth (name of an Indian month) in 1863, on 1st June, he took another revolutionary step for the betterment of women. He visited village Siar, (Ludhiana district) and baptised women by administering them *amrit*. He nominated them adherents of purity and chastity and *Rahit Maryada*. For the first time in history, women were administered amrit of *Khanda-Bata*.

The tenth guru, Guru Gobind Singh had administered *amrit* to men only. Apart from other teachings, the people were forbidden from killing the girl child, *Vatta*, child marriage and dowry. Sri Satguru Ji also prohibited the worship of graves and putting on amulet and veil. Everybody accepted Satguru's dictat.

Launching of Anand Maryada

Sri Satguru Ji chalked out a programme to launch a new marriage custom to liberate the people from the clutches of Hindu priests (*Pundits*) and menial workers. He preached the people to change the customary payments and the old, complex and costly rituals of marriage. This marriage custom, *Anand Karaj* was launched from village Khote, district Ferozepur (now Moga) on 3rd June, 1863. As per Sri Satguru Ji's command, after the recitation of *Asa-di-Vaar*, four circumambulation by 6 couples at the altar (*Vedi*) around the

perimeter of the sacred fire pit, were performed amidst recitation of *lavan* from Sri Adi Granth Sahib and administering of *amrit* after they had taken bath from head to toe. These were inter-caste marriages, dowry less and first of their kind in Sikh religion. On the basis of this historical evidence Government of India passed Anand Marriage Act on 22nd October in 1909.

Hindu priests and menial workers could not force anything, but they registered a complaint at Bagha Purana police station through village watchman that Sri Satguru Ji was accompanied by 500 disciples. He indulged in revolutionary propaganda. The Government machinery came into action. Sri Satguru Ji was sent to Sri Bhaini Sahib through various police stations and placed under house arrest. The Deputy Commissioner of Ludhiana had informed the Secretary Punjab about this development on 6th July, 1863. The Government had also got the report that 40,000 *Kukas* (Namdhari Sikhs) would reach Amritsar on Diwali festival day in 1863 and would revolt against the government.

Appointed Subas

Sri Satguru ji chalked out a new strategic plan putting up a face of meditation and contemplation. Firstly, he enunciated a Code of Conduct for *Rahit Maryada* by the Sikhs and secondly, he designated 5 Subas viz. Baba Jawahar Singh, Kahn Singh Nihang, Sahib Singh, Sudh Singh and Lakha Singh for organised preaching. Following his instructions, they started preaching about Namdhari Panth. The government apprehended a threat to its rule. Therefore, these 5 *Subas* were also put under house arrest at Sri Bhairi Sahib. Satguru Ji designated 17 more *Subas*. They were also

influential persons. They were pure and clean in thought, words and deeds. They were good orators and had magnetic power. Their background was loaded with experience. They were ex-service-men, *Nirmala* and *Vedanti* scholars and followers of Satguru Balak Singh. Some of them were from princely states and some from Punjab. Some of them were great scholars and others great patriots who had taken part in the 1857 war of independence and some were well to do agriculturists.

Suba Sahib Singh was incharge of postal services, trade and foreign relations. The task of preaching religion was assigned to other *Subas*. Bibi Hukmi was appointed as *Suba* for the awakening of women. These *Subas* were representatives of Sri Satguru Ji. But the British rulers put them under house arrest, some of them in Sri Bhaini Sahib and the rest in their own villages.

The Commissioner of Ambala circle himself came and told Sri Satguru Ji that they had put all the *Subas* also under house arrest, what would he do now? Sri Satguru Ji replied firm but with great patience "Now I'll create Ram Singh in each and every household." The Commissioner returned greatly disappointed.

Despite atrocities, house arrests of Sri Satguru Ji and the *Subas*, the strength and fragrance of the *Kukas* spread far and wide. As per the estimates of rulers, the number of Namdhari Sikhs had reached 3,00,000 by 1866. On 2nd February, 1867, Secretary Punjab government forwarded the reports received from districts about growth of *Namdhari Panth* to Foreign Secretary, Government of India and attached a list of 252 Namdhari leaders in 14 districts/princely states. But government could not find any solid ground to take action

against Sri Satguru Ji and relaxed house arrest by the end of 1866.

On 6th February, 1867 Satguru Ram Singh sent Suba Lakha Singh to inform the government that he would go to Anandpur Sahib on *Hola Mohalla*. In case the government did not allow and the sangat comes to Sri Bhaini Sahib in large numbers, it would entirely be the responsibility of the government. Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner and DSP came to Sri Bhaini Sahib to assess the situation and were forced out of compulsion to permit the Sri Satguru Ji to go to Anandpur Sahib. Urdu newspaper *Raih-Noo-Mai-Punjab* (Sialkot) had written in its 18th February, 1867 issue about Namdhari Sikhs uprising against government laws, aimed at the revival of Sikh empire.

Sri Satguru Ji reached Anandpur Sahib on 19th March, 1867 on the occasion of *Hola Mohalla* along with the *Subas*, a large number of Sikhs, and his followers. He told DC Hoshiarpur that the reason to visit Anandpur Sahib was to pay reverence at the Sikh holy shrine. He preached the *mahants* of gurdwaras to give up meat, liquor, lying, treachery and misconduct and asked them to follow *Gur-Maryada*. The Government record shows that the number of Namdhari Sikhs who reached there was between five to ten thousand and administration appreciated their discipline under the command of Sri Satguru Ji. A large number of people were baptised there as new Namdhari Sikhs.

In the same year, Sikhs reached Amritsar on Diwali festival, on the instructions of Sri Satguru Ji. As per the prophesy in the *Sau Sakhi* by Tenth Sikh Guru, it was talk of the town that this Namdhari congregation would be a grave danger for the British rule. The gathering of Namdhari Sikhs

was over 20,000, but well organised. On hearing about Sri Satguru Ji other people also turned up to have *darshan* and many of them became his disciple. Sri Satguru Ji went to Harimander Sahib and other gurudwaras along with his disciples to pay their obeisance. Only the priests and *Nihangs* of *Akal Takhat* were afraid of them that they would seize control of the Gurudwara. But everybody else, including the priests at Harimandir Sahib welcomed him. Priest of *Akal Takhat* was displeased at this as he had to show loyalty towards the British.

He issued a decree against Satguru Ram Singh of "not being Sikhs" and issued orders not to allow him and his followers to enter into gurudwaras. That was the reason that the priests of Nankana Sahib did not behave properly.

It was apprehended in government circles that Suba Sahib Singh could be his successor.

Sri Satguru Ji started his tours again and brought Malwa under the fold of Sikh *Rahit Maryada*. On Maghi (14 January) 1868, he organised a congregation at Muktsar. Priests of the gurudwara, did not allow him to pay his respects in the gurudwaras and asked him to undergo *Tankhah* (religious punishment). People were perplexed at the behaviour of these priests but could not do anything.

Sri Satguru Ji had taken the Namdhari *Panth* to its full blown youth. Government officers could not hide their (Namdhari's) rising power in their reports. On 27th October, 1867 Sialkot Administrator wrote that 80,000 rosaries were distributed there, which meant that as many as 80,000 people became *Kukas*. In Gujranwala, the number of *Kukas* was put at 5,000.

The government documents of 1867, confirm the

existence of Kuka postal service management. It has been written that its letters remain confidential and were delivered promptly with great responsibility after receiving them.

About the respect given to Sri Satguru Ji by the Sikh *sangat*, Inspector General- Punjab police wrote in 1869 that Sikhs did not consider Guru as an ordinary man, but manifestation of Almighty, re-embodiment of Guru Nanak Dev and Guru Gobind Singh. The Sikhs bowed their heads before him considering him as *Satguru Sacha Patshah*.

Apprehending the growing influence of the *panth*, atrocities were committed by the British on the Namdhari Sikhs. In February 1869, *Kukas* from district Hissar collected approximately 5000 Rupees by selling their land and began their journey to present that money to Satguru Ram Singh. Due to an altercation with Deputy Inspector near Tharajwala, more police force was called which captured them, snatched the money and made them walk for 65 miles to Muktsar. They were charged with revolt against the government. Mastan Singh and other leaders were fined.

Foreign Relations : Kashmir

After strengthening the roots of Sikhism in Punjab and creating anti-government feelings among the people, the Namdhari Sikhs developed their relations outside Punjab. In 1869 during Sri Satguru Ji's visit to Gujranwala and Sialkot districts, he sent Hira Singh Lammu Sadhoura and Tara Singh Qila Raipur along with 28 Sikhs to Maharaja of Kashmir. Maharaja Ranbir Singh recruited them in the army after consultation with his Guru-*Vedanti*. Due to their honesty, trust and devotion to work and duty, some more Namdhari Sikhs were recruited and a platoon was created and posted at Gilgit

border; they would get as salary one rupee more than other soldiers. These Sikhs were permitted to wear their attire.

The Chief Minister of the Maharaja, Diwan Kirpa Ram, was loyal to the British government. He used to send reports about Kuka regiment. Punjab government got it investigated through Deputy Inspector General. All efforts of Diwan went in vain due to the faith of the Maharaja in Vedanti as well as in the loyalty of Namdhari Sikhs. But he kept on trying. In 1871 by poisoning the ears of Maharaja about patriotism and cow-protection activities of the Kukas, Diwan got the platoon disbanded.

Nepal :

Nepal's Prime Minister Jang Bahadur could understand British policy to annex India and was sympathetic towards its patriots. That's why he granted asylum to Punjab's Queen Maharani Jindan, warriors of 1857, Nana Faranvees, Nawab Abdul Majid Khan, Babu Koir Singh and Babu Bandhu Singh etc.

In 1870, Sri Satguru Ji's disciple of Granth Garh, Baba Bishan Singh came closer to a Punjabi hawaldar Nandram. By improving his relations, he also met the Prime Minister. He told him about the rising power of the *Namdhari Panth* and the organisation against the British. Jang Bahadur, the Prime Minister expressed the desire to meet some senior leader and to fulfil it, Sri Satguru Ji sent Suba Sahib Singh and Suba Kahn Singh Nihang to meet him. They explained in detail about *Maryada*, policy of non-cooperation and *Swadeshi* spirit of lakhs of Kukas under the banner of Sri Satguru Ji. They presented him two superior breed milch buffalows and two valuable ponies on behalf of Sri Satguru

Ji. They revived the old memories of Khalsa Raj (because Jang Bahadur and Nihang both served as courtiers in Khalsa Durbar). As a special return gift, he sent a musk rosary of 108 beads, a Tibetan horse, two precious stone studded Khukhris, a valuable shawl and other cloth and 500 rupees to Sri Satguru Ji. Baba Bishan Singh stayed back to strengthen the relations.

Once Prime Minister, casually mentioned about the high moral values of the Namdhari Sikhs to resident colonel RC Lawrence. He immediately became alarmed and procured more information through his own sources, and sent exaggerated reports to foreign department of Government of India. On reading it, the government became alert and commented that relations with Kashmir and Nepal which means politics are beyond the scope of a Guru or a religious leader.

Afghanistan-Russia

In 1867, Sher Ali again became the chief of Afghanistan; He hated British because of wars and battles with the British in the past. That's why he was sympathetic towards Indian patriots. Baba Bishan Singh was a scholar of Persian and Pashto. So, he gave necessary information about Namdhari Panth to the Amir whose interest was aroused in this anti-British organisation and he sent his sons Abdulla and Yakub Khan to India. They visited Sri Bhaini Sahib also and returned impressed with Sri Satguru Ji. The British informers sent a report about this but could not mention anything about the talks they had.

Besides Baba Bishan Singh, Baba Gurcharan Singh

was also active in foreign mission. He reached Russia via Samarkand. At the time of Sri Satguru Ji's detention in Rangoon (Yangon, Myanmar), he continued to strengthen those relations

Prime Sacrifices for Independence - Amritsar

Sri Satguru Ji had chalked out a programme to unite all those countrymen who were sympathetic towards the nation. Not only the Kuka Sikhs, but Kuka Hindus and Kuka Muslims also considered it as their sacred duty to engage themselves in this mission. The British had adopted a policy of divide and rule. To divide them on religious lines, the British gave permission for cow slaughter in Punjab on 3rd May, 1849 including at clock tower in Amritsar in the close proximity of Harimandir Sahib. For Muslims there was no restraint in killing cows and eating and selling beef. Hindus and Sikhs hated it. Therefore, bitterness crept in mutual relations. Social and business relations also began to deteriorate. Hindu-Muslim riots also broke out and by 1849, the situation became fully tense. Bhai Dewa Singh saw a cow bone in the circumambulation of Harimandir Sahib, pricked by birds. He placed that bone before Sri Adi Granth Sahib and Sri Dasam Granth Sahib in Harimandir Sahib, so that self respect of the Sikhs could be awakened. It however did not have the desired effect. On the contrary, government ordered him 3 years imprisonment for viciating peace. Sensing more trouble, the Commissioner of Ambala division called a meeting of members of city council on 22nd May, 1871 to decide about continuance or closure of abbatoirs and to restore peace and tranquility. Although the suggestion of Hindus, Muslim and Sikh members was to close down the abattoirs for at

least a year, still the commissioner got the resolution to continue these approved in the name of religious freedom. On 3rd June, 1871 he got it approved by other prominent persons. With this, Muslims got an upper hand.

For the Sikhs, the abattoir adjacent to clock tower was violating the sanctity of their pilgrimage centre. The self respect of the Sikhs of Sri Satguru Ji was aroused. Ten Sikhs resolved to revenge and attacked the abbatoir on the night of 14/15th June 1871. The cows were set free and the butchers who came to confront them were killed. The cows were released in pastures near Bhagatan wala gate and after changing their blood soaked clothes, they went in different directions.

In the skirmish, 4 butchers were killed and 3 injured. Government made the utmost efforts but could not catch the Sikhs. To maintain its reputation, it arrested 12 innocents and charged them as murderers. After giving the ruling, the Magistrate got Deputy Commissioner's approval and sent the file to the Sessions judge.

One day, from among the Sikhs Baba Lehna Singh and Baba Beehla Singh were sitting before Sri Satguru Ji at Sri Bhaini Sahib. On being asked, they disclosed that they had accomplished the task. He ordered them to surrender before the district court, speak the truth, admit the guilt and save the innocents from being hanged.

They located their 5 other companions. All seven of them admitted their action committed for the sake of protecting religion, the poor and destitute and against the crooked policy of the government. To complete the *misal* file, a prosecution witness Gulab Singh was called from Ludhiana and after completing the formalities by 11th September 1871,

Lehna Singh son of Musadda Singh, Fateh Singh Bhatra, Hakam Singh Patwari and Beehla Singh were awarded death sentence, to be hanged till death; Lehna Singh son of Blaka Singh and Lal Singh were awarded *Kala Pani* exile (solitary confinement in cellular jail in Andaman and Nicobar islands) and Mehar Singh, Jhanda Singh and Bhagwan Singh were declared absconders. At the time of execution, the Martyrs had a head to toe bath in the *Sarovar* and after reciting *Bani* they put on the noose around their necks themselves on the 15th September 1871 and were hanged from a *banyan* tree near *Rambagh*. Jhanda Singh Thatta who was arrested on the 11th August 1873 was executed the following day. That's how these Sikhs made the supreme sacrifices for the independence of the nation and protested against the British policies.

Baganwala Case:

The Government got an abbatoir opened at Shimla. Cows were sent from Ambala for slaughtering there. Atar Singh Hazuria, Atar Singh from Kothe, Kahn Singh of Kamalpur, Dhaunkal Singh Raipur and Thamman Singh Dugri resolved to shut down the abbatoir. They managed swords also but when they reached Baganwala near Morinda, the river was flooded due to heavy rains. They were about to return when watchman Karambaksh challenged them and tried to take them to police station but was killed in the scuffle. A mob chased them but went back out of fear for violence by the Sikhs. All five Sikhs vanished from the scene like the thin air. This incident happened on 5th July 1871. Although some action regarding this was taken in the Morinda case but government could sense the growing resentment against the

British among the Namdhari Sikhs and it was clearly the zeal for independence.

Raikot

The abbatoir at Raikot was intentionally opened at a place where Guru Gobind Singh had taken rest. Gurudwara Tahliana Sahib was built at that place and there was a pond by its side. Birds used to sit on the walls of the Gurudwara and scraped meat. Once Namdhari Sikhs stayed over night at the inn of Suthra's at that place and they were told that with the backing of government, the butchers were having a field day. The *maryada* of the Sikhs was violated. These Sikhs went to Tajpur, resolved to end this situation and came back on 15th July 1871. They entered the abbatoir at night and cut the ropes of the cows. A man and a woman were killed and 7 persons were injured. The owner of the abbatoir Ranjha and two others escaped sensing the attack.

It had rained overnight and there was a storm too. Therefore, Sikhs disappeared safely. Police force of a nearby police station tried to search them out but because of the hostile weather went back empty handed.

The following day on 16th July, Deputy Commissioner Ludhiana came to know about it. He visited the site of incident along with Deputy Superintendent of Police. The failure of their policy to divide the Hindus and Sikhs and defile their religion was in his mind. Butchers would have stopped this business. He considered such activities of the Namdhari Sikhs as merely not to put an end to cow-slaughter but to oppose the British rule. Therefore, immediate action was taken as per his orders. The trackers followed their footprints

and found the footprints of 8 individuals going towards Nabha state. Thereafter, two of them went in one direction and six others towards village Chhiniwal in Patiala State. Maharaja Mohinder Singh of Patiala State was asked to get hold of the culprits. He declared a reward of Rs 250/- for any informer who got them arrested. Several people gave wrong names out of rancour, greed and enmity. Harnam Singh said that Guru Ram Singh instigated the killings. A similar statement was given by Sunder Singh out of enmity and greed but the investigating officer, Deputy Superintendent of Police Capt. Haris Ford wrote to Deputy Commissioner L.Cowan that these statements were false and baseless. Sri Satguru Ji had not permitted the *Kukas* for any killing.

Dal Singh of Chhiniwal was an accomplice in this action. He became prosecution witness because of the greed for 1000 rupees reward which was in addition to the reward announced by Patiala state. Based on his information, Gulab Singh was arrested from Chuharchak and Mangal Singh, Gurmukh Singh and Mastan Singh all three from their village Pithon.

The Court was held at Bassian. Dal Singh, his wife Ramo and Kanha became eye witnesses and after the verdict of lower court, session court judge JW Macnabb sentenced them to death on 27th July 1871. The Supreme Court confirmed the death sentence on 1st August.

Since Gulab Singh was to be produced by the government as a witness in the case of attack on Amritsar abbatoir, he was set free despite the death sentence by the court.

Suba Giani Ratan Singh and Ratan Singh Naiwala were

put behind the bars in Ludhiana prison on fake charges of instigating the people against the British rule.

A hanging board was set up at Raikot to carry out the death sentence. 3 Sikhs Gurmukh Singh, Mangal Singh and Mastan Singh kissed the noose and attained martyrdom on 5th August 1871.

Ludhiana

A law suit was filed against Suba Giani Ratan Singh and Ratan Singh Naiwala on 21st September 1871. Besides Dal Singh and Ram Kaur, Gulab Singh was a new witness. Session judge awarded them with death sentence on 26th October 1871. The Verdict was sent to 3 judges of the Chief Court to get the death sentence orders confirmed. Judge Bailinos commuted the death sentence to life imprisonment in Andaman and Nicobar islands on the basis of doubtful witnesses but Judge Campbell confirmed the death sentence on 14 November and the third judge Lindsay on 23 November 1871.

On 26th November 1871, both the Namdhari Sikh warriors swung from the noose outside the prison but they gave the message that the struggle for independence against the foreign rule would continue even after their death.

The Sikhs of Sri Satguru Ram Singh became the topic of discussion among the people. As per Sri Satguru Ji's instructions, they spoke the truth in the court, though they had to sacrifice their lives for it. The British understood a contrary meaning in it. They felt that the Namdhari Sikhs did not consider the British as their rulers and instead they obeyed Sri Satguru ji only. The Britishers wanted

that the Sikhs should follow their orders rather than that of *Satguru Sacha Patshah* whose orders were supreme for them.

The Namdhari Sikhs wore special attire and followed the Code of Conduct. Their relations with foreign countries were growing. They were the staunch enemies of the British government. They had adopted complete non-cooperation and *Swadeshi*. They had the traits of warriors.

From districts to circles and from circles to Punjab government and from there to the Government of India and its offices in England, some of the reports were:

"I see in the earlier papers that (Guru) Ram Singh was described as a successor or re-embodiment of Guru Nanak, the saint but now he is projected as the representative of (Guru) Govind Singh, the warrior.

Guru Ram Singh has no pretention to be a saintly *fakir*. He visits you escorted by half a dozen horsemen. He is followed by scores of men on foot. He comes into your courtroom like a prince."

-Statement of J. W. Macnabb , Commissioner,
Ambala - 5th November, 1871

"When I first heard of him as the successor of (Guru) Balak Singh of Hazro, he was known as Ram Singh Mahant, afterwards as Guru Ram Singh, then as Satguru and now as Satguru Patshah."

-G. McAndrew, Deputy Inspector General of Police,
Ambala Circle, dated 20th November 1871.

Sri Satguru Ji's visits and his discourses were swelling the numbers of his disciples who could make any sacrifice for the long stretched struggle. By 1871, about one million followers

became his true disciples or were deeply impressed by his programme. At that time, about 150 to 200 Namdhari Sikhs got agitated over another incident and they attacked Malerkotla.

MalerKotla Sacrifices

The Sikhs were distressed over the behaviour of Muslims of Malerkotla, a state in Punjab as they did not stop cow-slaughter. The slaughtering of an old ox in front of the head of village Farwahi (*Nambardar*) on the order of the Kotwal (Station House Officer) acted as a fuel on fire.

Gurmukh Singh had told the green grocer, sitting on radish bundle loaded on the back of an old oxen to take pity on the speechless animal and get down and walk. The issue went before Kotwal of Malerkotla; he got the ox slaughtered right in front of him (Gurmukh Singh) and paid its price to the green grocer.

Sulky Gurmukh Singh went to Sri Bhaini Sahib. Mata Jassan (Wife of Sri Satguru Ram Singh) had expired in November 1871. The congregation in her memory concluded on 13th January 1872 at Sri Bhaini Sahib. A large number of people had gathered there. 500 metric tonnes of wheat flour and pulses were cooked and served to the *Sangat*.

When the *Sangat* was returning to their homes, the *Nambardar* narrated the Malerkotla incident to a group of about 100 Sikhs. They became furious. The group went towards Akal Bunga from Ramsar. Mai Ind Kaur of Handiaya and Khem Kaur from Dittupura were already there. Ind Kaur held her head cover and gave a call for sacrifice for the religion. 250 Sikhs gathered there. When they came to know about the incident, they resolved to take revenge. They were ready to kill or die.

The S.H.O. of Sahnewal was present there with 5

policemen to keep a watch on the gathering. He asked Sri Satguru Ji to stop them. He sent Suba Lakha Singh, but none paid any heed to him. Thereafter, Sri Satguru Ji went himself and told his followers to remain calm for the time being. But they were bent upon doing something immediately. Hira Singh and Lehna Singh were their leaders. Hira Singh drew a line on the ground with his sword near Akal Bunga and called out the Sikhs that only those who were ready to sacrifice themselves may cross the line. 140 Sikhs, alongwith two ladies crossed the line and in this way the martyrs group came into being. Except for a few axes, spears and crooked bamboo clubs, they had only one or two swords and no other weapon. They started marching towards Malerkotla.

When they entered Patiala state on way to Malerkotla a sergeant who was sent by the S.H.O. to keep an eye on them returned.

The SHO after reaching Ludhiana sent a detailed report to Deputy Commissioner, Cowan. He called solicitors of Patiala and MalerKotla on 14th January 1872 and alerted them of any untoward incident.

Sri Satguru Ji also sent Suba Lakha Singh to Ludhiana on 15th January 1872 and told. Cowan to be careful and take immediate action but instead, he detained the Suba.

The martyrs' group reached Rabon via Rampur and Payal villages and stayed overnight. On the night of 14 January, they went to Malaud to ask for help from Sardar Badan Singh and requested for weapons also. On his refusal, a skirmish broke out and in sheer anger, two persons were killed from each side and 5 injured. They took away a few swords, rifles, ammunition and mares from the stable and went off.

When the Deputy Commissioner got the news, he called Sri Satguru Ji through Tehsildar Lehna Singh. His Holiness reached Malaud with 5 *Subas*, riding on horses. The Deputy Commissioner complained to Sri Satguru Ji about bloodshed by the group and said he will be called to Ludhiana, if needed. Sri Satguru Ji left for Sri Bhaini Sahib but on 16th January 1872 he stayed at Siar village because of rain.

Malerkotla was about 10 miles away from Malaud. The Martyrs' group entered the city before dawn from Dhaba gate side. Crossing streets and roads, they straight went to the locality of *Chirimars*, where a large abattoir was situated. The martyrs' group cut loose the ropes of the cows and drove the herd away. Thereafter, they reached kotwali. By this time uproar prevailed. Police and armed people fought a pitched battle. Kotwal Ahmad Khan and 7 policemen were killed and many seriously injured. Rest of them escaped. 7 Sikhs died, 2 seriously injured and 31 others were wounded.

The group came out of Kotla and stayed at Rar village for the night. Group leader Hira Singh realised that it was not the right time to raise arms and that was the reason that other people did not join them. He told his companions that they would surrender, but if someone wanted to go back, he can go. Many returned but a group of 68 Sikhs stayed overnight at village well and kept on reciting *shabads*. Next day they walked to the police station at Sherpur and surrendered themselves. Their weapons and horses were confiscated. They were detained at Amargarh Fort for the night.

Naib Nazim Niaz Ali informed Maharaja Patiala about their detention and the information was sent to Government of India by Punjab Government. It was said that Nazim had

arrested Kuka Sikhs from Rar village on 15 January 1872, but in a telegram sent to Home Secretary at Calcutta, it was reported that they were caught from Sherpur on 16 January. When Nazim went to Malaud to tell the Deputy Commissioner Cowan about his bravery, he ordered him to reach Malerkotla immediately with the Kukas.

The Deputy Commissioner asked the Heads of State of Nabha, Jind, Patiala and Sangrur States to send army units and cannons to Malerkotla and he himself reached there on 16 January 1872. He wrote to Commissioner Ambala about the number of revolutionaries being approximately 125 and said that he would hang them or blow them up with cannons the next morning. However, Commissioner Forsyth instructed him not to be in a hurry. He said he would reach Malerkotla after sending Guru Ram Singh in exile.

Terribly shaken and afraid of the Kukas, L. Cowan was their blood thirsty. He was waiting at Malerkotla for the Kuka group. The group reached Kotla from Sherpur in the evening walking through the rough, uneven and worn out pathways. 9 cannons were set in Jamalpur ground outside Malerkotla. 49 Kukas were blown up the same day with 7 Kukas being blown up from each of the 7 cannons. Two cannons were reserved for fear of any attack. A boy Bishan Singh was martyred with sword. Cowan's wife standing by his side asked him to set the innocent boy free but Cowan laid the condition that if the boy Bishan Singh commits that he has no relation with Guru Ram Singh, he will set him free. When the boy was told about it, he angrily pulled Cowan's long beard and he was executed.

Despite having received a letter from T. D. Forsyth Commissioner Ambala, not to execute the death sentence

to anyone, the group of last 7 was positioned before the cannons and blown up by the Deputy Commissioner.

Next day Forsyth arrived. He blew up remaining 16 Kuka Sikhs by cannons after an eyewash hearing in the case. Wariam Singh was told that he was short so he could not be blown up. The brave Sikh gathered some bricks and stones and stood at the pile and joined the martyrs' group.

At the time of the execution, Giani Gian Singh, a Sikh historian was present in person. He wrote that Kukas themselves kept on coming before the cannons like moths. Cowan wrote in his report that he wanted to tie the Kukas to the cannons' mouth for blowing up but the need for it did not arise, though to be little this martyrdom, someone had made the propaganda that kukas were blown up by tying to the mouth of the cannons.

In this incident the Kukas, who risked their lives were martyred, but both ladies were handed over to Patiala state. Obedient, yes-men were rewarded from Kotla treasury. On 18th January a formal court was held. Among those rewarded were : Rs 1000/- to Naib Nazim Niaj Ali, 300/- to Panjab Singh Darbari, 200/- to Jaimal Singh and Rs 50/- each to other five, This is how the government recognised their faithfulness towards the British rule.

As has been written earlier, 4 Kukas injured in Malaud skirmish were detained. To punish them, the commissioner reached Malaud with his paraphernalia on 19th January 1872. A case was registered; witnesses testified and the Sessions judge awarded them exile and life sentence. They were imprisoned in Ludhiana prison.

Although Lieutenant Governor of Punjab appreciated Deputy Commissioner and Commissioner, for their loyalty

and justified their action, but in response to a query by a member of British Parliament, Hirland, Under Secretary State, Grant Dough, had to answer on 29th February 1872 that Cowan did not register any case against them. On 30th April 1872 Viceroy of India Lord North Brooke wrote to Punjab Governor asking why absolutely helpless Kukas were put to death. The Council of the Governor General also disapproved this action as unjust, illegal, beastly, cruel and inhuman.

Deputy Commissioner L Cowan did not have a legal right (jurisdiction) to order blowing up of the Kukas by cannons. For his evil and illegal act, Cowan was dismissed from service on 20th March 1872 and Forsyth was transferred to Auadh.

Sri Satguru Ram Singh, alongwith prominent *Subas* was sent to Allahabad from Ludhiana in a special train on 18th January 1872 at 4 a.m. The question remained as to why was Sri Satguru Ji deported if the British rule considered government's action in Malerkotla incident as illegal? Why wasn't this suppression stopped? The reason was the rising popularity of the Namdhari organisation. The British government feared their own doom and retreat from India.

TERROR TO THE RULERS

Satguru Ram Singh was exiled on 18 January 1872 at 4 a.m. He was neither tried in the court of law nor arrested in public view like the blowing up of the Kukas by cannons. The British rulers were apprehensive that if he was exiled in broad daylight, entire Punjab will stand up in revolt. which may be impossible to control.

Sri Satguru Ji halted at Siar villiage in the afternoon of 17th January as it was raining. He heard the sound of cannons being fired. He said to Suba Kahn Singh who was with him, that there was sound of heavy guns being fired, they have sacrificed their lives. Otherwise they would not have been appreciated. -Satguru Bilas Baba Santokh Singh

From Siar, Sri Satguru Ji had barely reached Sri Bhaini Sahib when Sub-Inspector of Sahnewal, Shah Wali Shah read out the order of Commissioner Forsyth that he (Satguru Ji) was called to Ludhiana. He realised the gravity of the situation. Despite the cold winter night, rain and a blast of cold wind, *Sangat* was already there to accord a warm welcome to him on coming from Siarh. He assuaged the feelings of his father Baba Jassa Singh, brother Budh Singh, Subas and the *sangat*. Gurdit Singh was asked to bring a bullock cart and he sat in the cart putting on a woollen turban on and a black blanket, accompanied by Bhai Nanu Singh,

Suba Sahib Singh and Suba Jawahar Singh. When the cart started rolling, Wali Shah and his companion policemen moved along, *sangat* ran after the cart and broke down and cried their heart out. He assured the wailing and crying *sangat* and said that he would come back soon. He instructed them to make Karah (a cooked mixture of wheat flour, purified butter, sugar and water) of Rs 11/- in the morning, distribute it and return to their homes. They should recite the *Bani* and count the rosary beads of *Naam*.

He, along with *Subas* and Nanu Singh, reached Ludhiana at about one O'clock. The cart was sent back. They were produced before the commissioner. He talked to him (Sri Satguru Ji) for two hours. Sri Satguru ji was accused of having a complete knowledge of the incidents of Amritsar, Raikot and Malerkotla but did not bother to inform the government. Therefore, he was being exiled. Besides this, as per Sant Santokh Singh, the British showed him two documents. One was from the kings of different princely states mentioning that he should be sent away from the country. If he remained there, he would spare neither the British nor them. Second document was from priests of Akal Bunga, Anandpur, Muktsar and Damdama Sahib. They asked the government to deport him from the country, if he remained in this country, he would spare none of them. The Brahmins already wanted the something. (Satguru Bilas - Editor Jaswinder Singh.)

Sri Satguru ji was arrested under the Bengal regulation Act-III of 1818. According to this regulation government could detain even those persons against whom there was not sufficient ground for a suit in the court of law or when a case could not be registered as per such proceedings.

Sri Satguru Ji's attendants, accompanying *Subas* and

Suba Lakha Singh, who came to Ludhiana earlier were sent off to Allahabad at 4 A.M. by a special train. To keep an eye on Guru Ji, European officer Jackson and a platoon of 12 Dogras accompanied him.

Lieutenant Colonel Bailey sent force from Sahnewal to Sri Bhaini Sahib soon after the train left to detain the *Subas* Kahn Singh, Brahma Singh, Hukma Singh, Pahara Singh, Gopal Singh and Sujan Singh and they were taken to Ludhiana. Considering the later two less dangerous, they were sent back. Others were sent to Allahabad by train on the next day, 19th January 1872 under the supervision of Gorkha guards. Later Roor Singh, Malook Singh and Man Singh were also sent to Allahabad. None had any warrant against them. Warrants were sent to Magistrate of Allahabad on 22 January 1872. Besides this, Maharaja Patiala sent Sant Mangal Singh Bishanpuria also to Allahabad to take a revenge on him.

Due to the demolished wall of Allahabad jail and out of fear of escaping, Sri Satguru Ji and others were detained in the fort.

A letter had already been secretly circulated on 28th July 1871 by colonel JCP Bailey Deputy Inspector General of Police, Punjab that whosoever, an organisation or an individual gave any information about the Kukas, he should be rewarded suitably. A similar letter was received by circle office Ambala also.

As a result of this, reports started pouring in from different places. A Kuka regiment in Kashmir was disbanded and on 27th November 1871, a list of Sri Satguru Ji, Subas and 50 other prominent Namdhari Sikhs was sent secretly to Inspector General Police, Punjab. All Deputy Inspector Generals of Police were again reminded on 3rd January 1872

that secret records about the *Kukas* must be collected in each district.

There was panic and wide spread fear due to Namdhari Panth organized by Sri Satguru ji. An imminent grave danger of the *Kuka* revolt seemed to be the dooms day for the British rule. J.W. Macnabb sent a report to secretary Punjab L.H. Griffin saying that the real objective of the *Kukas* was not only to punish butchers so as to put an end to cow slaughter but also it was an open defiance of the British rule. It was revolt against the British government. There was a rumour that in the month of Chet (April 1872), Kuka Guru would hold a large gathering to show of his strength and avenge the execution of Giani Singh (Suba Ratan Singh)

100 men will attack Malerkotla to put an end to cow slaughter. They will take control of its capital and distribute the arms and ammunition and horses among all. This will be followed by attacks on Nabha, Jind and Patiala. Roads and rail communication between Ludhiana and Ambala will be disrupted.

For a big gathering, people were reaching Sri Bhaini Sahib, selling their property and land. 23 families of Sakraudi village of Patiala State sold their property and came to the fold of Sri Satguru Ji. Dewa Singh of Jind also acted similarly.

It was also mentioned in the report that Bishan Singh was preaching Namdhari ideology in Kabul, Narain Singh in Gawaliar, Kahn Singh in Benaras, Nihang Singh (Kahn Singh Nihang) and Sahib Singh in Nepal and Hema Singh in Kashmir. The *Mastane Kukas* were confident that they would force the British to leave the country. Macnabb felt that there were thousands of *Kukas* in the provincial and the British

armies who had been directed by Suba Jawahar Singh to keep their identity secret. Guru Ram Singh was constantly in correspondence with Nepal and Jammu. Therefore, there was every possibility of a revolt against the government in Chet (April 1872). According to him, this strategy was chalked out during the *Maghi* congregation on 11-13 January 1872 and accordingly they attacked Malerkotla.

This all pointed to the growing popularity of Satguru Ram Singh and *Namdhari Panth* and to check it, the British exiled Sri Satguru Ji.

The Allahabad British Council ordered that Sri Satguru Ji be deported out of India and be kept under house arrest in the British Burma (Myanmar). Therefore, Sri Satguru Ji and Nanu Singh were sent to Howrah by train under the supervision of an inspector of police on 10th March 1872. From there, they were sent to Rangoon (Yangon) by ship. This was kept a closely guarded secret out of fear. Other *Subas* under house arrest in Allahabad fort could not know where the British had taken Sri Satguru Ji. Sant Mangal Singh was let off on 3rd March 1873 under several conditions on the recommendation of Maharaja Patiala.

The warrant to detain Sri Satguru Ji issued by the Governor General's Council was sent by the Secretary of Home Department, Government of India to Chief Commissioner of British Burma from Calcutta on 9th March 1872. He wrote on 11th March "Sir, Ram Singh, put on board all right at 7 PM."

After deporting him into exile, the government machinery came into further action. Reports were sought from Punjab police about each *Suba*. Commissioner of Ambala, JW Macnabb went to Allahabad and interrogated the arrested

Kukas. He got approval of his decisions from the Council and orders were sent through Secretary, Government of India about the detention of *Subas* as follows.

1. Suba Man Singh and Suba Hukma Singh were detained in Chunar fort on 1st December 1872 for an indefinite period.
2. Suba Roor Singh, Malook Singh and Pahara Singh were jailed in Asirgarh fort on 15th December 1872 for an indefinite period.
3. Suba Lakha Singh, Jawahar Singh and Brahma Singh were sent to Moulmeen (Burma) via Calcutta on 30th December 1872 for a long duration.
4. Suba Sahib Singh and Suba Kahn Singh were initially detained at Allahabad, but were sent to Aden on 24th February 1873.

All of them were sent to different places on different dates in such a way that none of them would know about the others.

The government wanted to relax by putting an end to their activities but Sri Satguru Ji's access was greater than the British. He managed to have correspondence with Punjab. Secretary Punjab LH Griffin wrote to Secretary Government of India EC Bailey about it:

"Guru Ram Singh and his companions are keeping in touch with Punjab through two servants and a grocer in Allahabad from whom they get grocery items." Therefore he recommended a strict vigil to be kept on all his visitors.

By the way, government itself helped some mail of his to be delivered. A few examples of it are given in the book "Hukumname of Sri Satguru Ram Singh" compiled by Jaswinder Singh, a research scholar.

In November 1872, a letter written by Budh Singh (Satguru Hari Singh) was sent to Rangoon to Sri Satguru Ji and his letter of February 1873 was delivered to his brother Budh Singh.

In October 1873, a letter from Subas at Aden was delivered to Sri Satguru Ji in Rangoon.

On 9th December 1876, a letter from Suba Maan Singh from Chunar was delivered to Sri Satguru Ji.

In July and September 1878, letters from Bibi Nandan (daughter of Sri Satguru Ji) and Satguru Hari Singh were translated into English and delivered to him.

A complete vigil was kept on Sri Satguru Ji. Wherever he was detained, he was kept separately from other prisoners so that none could meet him. He was kept under heavily guarded vigil round the clock.

On reaching Rangoon, Sri Satguru Ji was initially detained at central Jail with all the facilities of a political prisoner. This ward was earlier a female prison ward. It was close to the ward for European prisoners. There was also a well in it (Sri Satguru Ji used to take water from the well only). He was allowed to stroll around but was not allowed to meet anyone. He was provided with a cow. Besides Nanu Singh, 3 upper caste Hindus were in his service. The government had already got it signed by Nanu Singh that he would stay with Sri Satguru Ji at his own will in the prison without any objection.

He told the authorities about the hot weather and therefore he was shifted to Rangoon cantonment Post Office Building. Bahadur Shah Zafar was detained in the same building till he breathed his last in 1862 and thereafter his

wife Zeenat Mahal continued to be under detention for about 4 years.

In this building, a well was dug up and the same cow was provided for milk and curd. The government used to spend around 40 rupees per month on his food, which included almonds also.

Sri Satguru Ji asked the government to provide him 2 books of selective *Bani* of Sri Adi Granth Sahib and Sri Dasam Granth Sahib. The Government sent all *Banis* to him, except Bachitar Natak.

Sri Satguru Ji used to keep himself engaged in *naam simran*, reading scriptures and meditation during the detention. He would think of how to establish contact with his countrymen. No one could get any information about his being detained there. Still he found a way out to establish contacts with local people. He planned to serve a lunch to the *Pundits*. He would talk to Nanu Singh loudly so that someone might come to know that there were some *Punjabi* detainees.

Guru Hari Singh's application of 13th January 1873 to visit Sri Satguru Ji was rejected. Harnam Singh and his wife Mai Chando from Punjab asked for permission to visit Sri Satguru Ji. They got the permission on 23rd October 1874 to visit Rangoon but were not allowed to see him.

Darbara Singh, village head (*Numberdar*) of Raipur tried to take permission to see Sri Satguru Ji. He had gone to the residence of Ludhiana SP Warburton on some work. His wife asked the reason for his sadness, weak body and tearful eyes. She felt pity when Darbara Singh told her that they haven't got any information about Satguru Ram Singh. She tactfully asked Warburton about it and passed on the

information about the whereabouts of Sri Satguru Ji to him. Darbara Singh had sold his property and used to live at Sri Bhaini Sahib. On getting to know the Rangoon address of Sri Satguru Ji from Madam Warburton, Darbara Singh's face brightened up. He reached there in disguise. He brought back a *Hukumnama* (directive) of Sri Satguru Ji that Budh Singh would be known as Hari Singh from that day onwards. He would keep *Sikhism* intact. He brought this *Hukumnama* in January 1975.

The news of whereabouts of Satguru Ram Singh spread like the scent of flowers through Sri Bhaini Sahib. The Sikhs used to go to meet Sri Satguru Ji. They would go with prayers and return with *Hukumnamas*, but everything happened secretly. Some of them would grease the palm of the security guards also.

There was a wandering medicant, near Sri Satguru Ji's bungalow. He would also help. There were mango trees nearby. Namdahari Sikhs would keep on sitting under the shade of these trees. When Sri Satguru Ji would come out on horse cart for a stroll, they used to have a glimpse of him.

Sri Satguru Ji wrote about the security and strict vigil being kept by the British in one of his *Hukumnamas*

- "One who is the white man, whose order prevails over all countries, his order is pasted on the wall saying that if someone talks to him (Sri Satguru Ji), arrest that person, if someone throws anything inside from outside or from inside to outside arrest that one also. Don't let anyone stand around that place."

– *Hukumnama* 9

ਜਿਹੜਾ ਬਡਾ ਗੋਰਾ ਹੈ, ਸਾਰੇ ਦੇਸਾਂ ਉਤੇ ਜਿਸਦਾ ਹੁਕਮ ਚਲਦਾ ਹੈ, ਉਸ ਦਾ

ਲਿਖਾ ਏਥੇ ਕੰਧ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਲਾਇਆ ਹੈ, ਜੇ ਕੋਈ ਆਦਮੀ ਏਸਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਗਲਬਾਤ ਕਰੇ ਤਾਂ ਉਸਨੂੰ ਕੈਦ ਕਰੇ, ਜੇ ਕੋਈ ਬਾਹਰ ਤੇ ਸਿੱਟੇ ਅੰਦਰ ਜਾਂ ਅੰਦਰੋਂ ਬਾਹਰ ਸਿੱਟੇ ਤਾਂ ਉਸਨੂੰ ਭੀ ਕੈਦ ਕਰੇ। ਅਰ ਕੋਈ ਆਦਮੀ ਨਾ ਏਥੇ ਸੋਹੋਂ ਖੜਾ ਹੋਣ ਦਿਓ।

Sri Satguru Ji wrote about the reason for it also—

- They (British) keep a hawk's eye on my correspondence and seriously think that through his letters, he could motivate his followers to rebel against the British rule. He has large followers.

-Hukumnama 6

ਏਨਾ ਨੂੰ ਏਹੁ ਬਡਾ ਭਰਮ ਹੈ ਚਿਠੀ ਦੀ ਬੜੀ ਤਕੜਾਈ ਰਖਦੇ ਹੈਨ ਮੇਰੀ, ਕਹਿੰਦੇ ਹੈਨ ਕਿਤੇ ਚਿਠੀ ਭੇਜ ਕੇ ਮੁੜ ਸੂੜ ਨਾ ਕਰਾਏ ਦੇਵੇ। ਏਥੇ ਪਿਛੇ ਬਹੁਤ ਆਦਮੀ ਹੈ।

- Even after shifting there, they (British) are still scared of my presence as if I could re-enact the revolt of 1857. It is their illusion. They fear my existence as a death knell to them. That is why they don't allow any one to see me.

-Hukumnama 9

ਪਿਛੋਂ ਤਾਂ ਲਿਆਏ ਹੈ, ਜੇ ਏਥੇ ਰਹਾ ਤਾਂ ਚੰਦੇ ਬਰਗਾ ਕੰਮ ਕਰਾਇ ਦਊਗਾ। ਅਰ ਹੁਣ ਇਹ ਡਰ ਹੈ ਭਾਈ ਚਿਠੀ ਭੇਜ ਕੇ ਪਿਛੇ ਸੂੜ ਕਰਾ ਦਿਊ। ਏਹੁ ਭਰਮ ਹੈ। ਮੇਰੇ ਸਰੀਰ ਦਾ ਕਾਲ ਬਰਗਾ ਭੈ ਹੈ ਏਨਾ ਨੂੰ। ਏਸੇ ਕਰਕੇ ਮੇਰੇ ਪਾਸ ਕਿਸੇ ਨੂੰ ਆਉਣ ਨਹੀਂ ਦਿੰਦੇ।

ਹੁਕਮਨਾਮਾ-9

UNLEASHED A HURRICANE OF ATROCITIES

The British government was afraid of Sri Satguru Ram Singh Ji and felt that he would light such a bonfire against the government in Punjab that its heat would burn the British. So he was exiled. The government was also apprehensive that in his absence, his dauntless warriors would create chaos in Punjab. To prevent it, the British put strict restrictions on the Namdhari Sikhs (*Kukas*).

The notorious step in this regard was to destroy their religious centre at Sri Bhaini Sahib. The British got secret information about arms, treasure and secret documents being kept there. Therefore, after deporting into exile Sri Satguru Ji, Lieutenant Colonel JCP Bailey, DIG Lahore circle surrounded Sri Bhaini Sahib in the early morning on 18th January 1872 along with 25 cavalry soldiers. They expelled Sri Satguru Ji's father Baba Jassa Singh, brother Budh Singh (Guru Hari Singh), daughter Bibi Nand Kaur, her three kids, Shop Manager, Wariam Singh, his personal assistant Makhan Singh and all other Sikhs from the headquarters in biting cold. Every recess in wall, almirahs and other nook and corner were searched. Even the land was dug up. Granaries were searched by pushing spears. A search was again conducted on 19th

January 1872. On both the days, 3 *Numberdars* from the village were made to accompany during the searches. Entire property, treasury and arms were enlisted.

The confiscated articles included 36 axes, 6 broad axes with long handles, 2 Khukhris, a battle axe, a club, sticks, 1828 rupees and 8 Anna cash, gold and silver ornaments, shawls, lohi, rosary of wood and a valuable embroidered gown. Approximately, movable property worth Rs. 5400 was locked in a box and sent to Ludhiana. 172 Sikhs and ladies used to live at Sri Bhaini Sahib. Besides, there were 82 milk cattle and horses etc.

3 men and 2 ladies were allowed to stay back to serve the family members of Sri Satguru Ji, 11 *Kuka* Sikhs to cater for animals were permitted to live at the gurdwara and the rest were made to walk 13-14 miles to reach Ludhiana. There, the Deputy Commissioner warned them not to take part in any revolutionary activity and told them to return to their respective homes.

A police post consisting of inspector Umrao Ali Shah and 20 other policemen was established at Sri Bhaini Sahib in the gateway-porch, to keep a vigil on anyone going out. From outside, only five persons were allowed to enter at a time to pay their obeisance.

The Lieutenant Governor of Punjab had put restrictions on assembly of more than 5 Kukas through a letter. Strict action was to be taken if more than 5 persons assembled anywhere.

To give a proof of their loyalty to the British, the Punjabi stooges of the British, including Sikhs, approved the government action. Among them were Sri Bhaini Sahib's *numberdars* Ghumanda and Sukhu, the Sikh chiefs, landlords,

Mahants and priests of gurdwaras, Rajas and Maharajas. The Maharaja of Patiala had, as per the letter of 20th January 1872, announced confiscation of properties of the *Kukas* and alleged that under the religious pretext (Guru) Ram Singh's aim and desire was to regain the reign.

Dayal Singh Majithia held a meeting of representatives, priests, religious heads and Sikh chieftains on 22 March 1872 at Amritsar. A resolution was adopted at this meeting that their customs and traditions are different from the *Kukas*. The activities of the *Kukas* had tarnished the honour they received for their services in the 1857 revolt. "We, the prominent Sikhs at the gathering in Amritsar unanimously declare that we do not have any link with the recently set up *Kuka* movement. Whatever steps the government had taken were essential and are praiseworthy."

-Punjab Government Gazette 28 March 1872

It had signatures of 14 representatives. In May 1872 the government action was approved by *Nawabs*, traders and 147 persons of Jalandhar municipality including that of Karnal, Jagadhari, Bilaspur, Mustafabad and Ambala on 28 June, 1872. 140 prominent citizens of Hoshiarpur and 500 *Sodhis*, *Bedis* and *Rais* of Anandpur supported the British. 437 landlords, members of municipal committee, *zaildar*, traders from Jalandhar gathered under the chairmanship of Sardar Bikram Bahadar Singh Ahluwalia and on 28 August, 1872 a letter was sent to Punjab government that *Kukas* were wrong and TD Forsyth commissioner Ambala was right. *Sardars*, Chieftains and *Nawabs* of Karnal and *Kalsia* along with their henchmen were also among them. Lists of their signatures as well as that of Jagadhari, Bilaspur and Manimajra were attached. Maharaja of Sangrur ordered that every body must

renunciate Namdharism. Maharaja Faridkot acted like a devil. He tortured *Kukas*. The media through various daily papers- The English Man, The Hindu Patriot, The Indian, The Statesman, The Friends of India also sided with the government.

Everyone was enemy of the *Kukas*. They could not understand what their fault was. No one knew where their spiritual head was. They could neither go to anyone nor share their suffering and grief.

The DSPs of all districts were told to make lists of *Kukas*, with their names and addresses and to keep a tight vigil on them as if they were criminals. On 8th March 1872, a government order was issued to enlist those persons also who would bail them out.

A storm of atrocities blew against the *Kukas*. Those unprincipled and some greedy *Zaildars*, *numbardars* and chieftains etc. who were waiting for the establishment of *Kuka* rule, declared that they were not *Kukas*. Among them were Hari Singh of Dera Baba Nanak and Kartar Singh Bedi. DC Gurdaspur sent a report about them to Superintendent of Police of Amritsar division.

The Namdhari Sikhs could not understand this and took it as God's will, but to keep themselves spiritually strong, they meditated all the more. They were already reciting scriptures. They continued their political boycott of the government in line with the Satguru's *maryada* which kept them socially and spiritually strong. The government records admit that:

1. *Kuka* does not tell a lie.
2. Does not drink
3. Can't be loyal to the British.

However, apparently there was no political activity among Namdhari Sikhs. They were shattered by the separation from Sri Satguru Ji.

During these days, Kukas heard the rumours that a *Pathan* from Peshawar, Gul Sher Khan had killed Viceroy of India Lord Meo on 8th Februry 1872 at Andaman Islands. They thought it was he who had deported Sri Satguru Ji and committed atrocities against the Namdharis. God had punished him for his misdeeds.

There were restrictions on worship and recitation of *Gurbani* too. Guru Hari Singh organised an *Akhand Path* on Dussehra festival in 1872, but DSP JP Warburton did not allow its ceremonial closing (*Bhog*) and obstructed it.

Due to the absence of political activities, it appeared to the government that the *Kukas* were mellowed down. Reports to this effect were sent to Government of India by Punjab government. These reports were collected districtwise.

Due to political sluggishness of the *Kukas*, on 18th February 1873, a letter was sent to all DIG's not to enforce strictly the order forbidding assembly of more than 5 *Kukas* but to keep a strict watch on them. The officers also wanted to assess the situation by handing over the property of Guru Ram Singh to Guru Hari Singh.

RAY OF HOPE AGAINST SERVITUDE

Those patriots who upheld the cause of motherland dearly, assembled at Amritsar to save the nation from being engulfed in slavery. They were awakened by the threat of conversion of 4 Sikh students to Christianity. In 1873 an organisation was formed whose main leaders were Baba Khem Singh Bedi, Thakar Singh Sandhawalia and Kanwar Bikram Singh Kapurthala. It was named Singh Sabha and Sandhawalia became its President. This Sabha attracted attention of the Sikhs

The government did not consider this Singh Sabha loyal to it. Lahore's Singh Sabha, which was formed by Gurmukh Singh, appealed to the government. Its programme included:

1. Nothing will be discussed about the government in Sri Guru Singh Sabha
2. Well being of the Qaum (religion), and obedience to the government, will be taken care of.

From the same Singh Sabha, Khalsa Divan and Chief Khalsa Divan sprouted, which supported the British.

W.H. McLeod wrote about the Sikhs associated with the ideology of Singh Sabha, "These men were conservatives and alarmed by the disturbances caused by *Kuka* Sikhs and

were anxious that the orthodox Sikh community should not be blamed by their British rulers."

-Sikhs of the Khalsa

Baba Khem Singh Bedi was in favour of considering Guru Ram Singh as 12th Guru of the Sikhs. It was for this reason that he supported the book *Khurshid Khalsa* (Urdu) by Bawa Nihal Singh Kalsian. The book stated that Guru Ram Singh was 12th Guru, a successor of Guru Gobind Singh. It is a different issue that under pressure of Gurmukh Singh and his companions and out of fear of the government, Baba acknowledged that "Guru word will not be written before the name of Janab Singh Sahib Ram Singh"

The information about the return of Maharaja Dalip Singh to Punjab in 1889, was celebrated by the Amritsar group, but Lahore's Singh Sabha wrote on 20th October 1889 in response to Maharaja's letter to come back to Punjab that the entire Khalsa Panth and residents of Gujranwala, with whom he felt related because of it being his birth place replied to his letter, "you rebelled against the British government, it is not a wise act".

It was an act of conspiracy by the British so as to detach the Sikhs from the embodied Guru and confuse them as worshippers of *Granth Guru* or *Panth Guru* and getting religious edicts by people favouring them against the Namdhari Sikhs and to oppose them. Sri Satguru Ji wrote in a Hukumnama:

"Firstly the "grace of the Sikhs" was bestowed on Bir Singh then on Maharaj Singh and now the grace of the Sikhs has been bestowed on me." -Hukumnama 7

“ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਸਿਖਾਂ ਦੀ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਬੀਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਤੇ ਹੋਈ, ਫੇਰ ਮਹਾਰਾਜ ਸਿੰਘ ਤੇ ਹੋਈ ਤੇ ਹੁਣ ਮੇਰੇ ਉੱਤੇ ਸਿਖਾਂ ਦੀ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਹੋਈ ਹੈ।”

25 Kukas were sent to Mahant Narain Singh in Nabha to baptise them by administering *Amrit* as per the order of *Takhats*, the Sikh temporal seat. It was publicly proclaimed in Bagliwala that the Satguru would not return, so they should give up Kukaism. Investigations started in Hazro also.

A few *Kukas* stayed overnight at village Takhrian. The police came to know of it and expressed its anger on the *Numberdar* for allowing them to stay. As a penalty for this crime, he was dismissed from *Numberdari* and was sentenced to six years rigorous imprisonment and fined Rs 100/-.

Even reading scriptures by *Kukas* was a crime. Lohgarh's Sardar Attar Singh son of Sant Hakam Singh Grewal organised Akhand Path (continuous reading of Sri Adi Granth Sahib) and holy congregation. Informers sent the information to police station. Police came and disturbed the occasion. S Attar Singh was prosecuted and awarded 5 years imprisonment. He expired in prison itself. Sant Kishan Singh Chhutiya was awarded 3 years, all *Pathis* (Granth readers) Harnam Singh, Labh Singh, Rai Singh and Lal Singh were awarded 2 years imprisonment each and *Dhupiyas*, guards and cooks were imprisoned for 6 months each.

In Khyala village, because of a bit relaxed restrictions, Baba Sant Singh of Majha organised 101 recitations of scriptures and holy fire (Hawan) of 60 Kgs. of ghee was performed. He had to face 5 years imprisonment. Government used to keep a strict vigil on all those also who recited Chandi Di Vaar—*Bani* of Guru Gobind Singh.

As already mentioned, the *Kukas* could come to the *Dera* (Gurdwara) only in groups of 5 each to pay reverence to Guru Hari Singh. Therefore, hundreds of men and women

kept spending their nights on the sand, under the open sky, beyond the boundary of Sri Bhaini Srahib and waited for their turn.

In June 1877, permission was granted to visit in groups of 10 each in stead of 5. They felt relieved

According to the *Hukamnama* of Sri Satguru Ram Singh, the *Kukas* felt satisfied and happy over having Satguru Hari Singh as their spiritual head. That was the reason that they started coming to visit him. By the year 1875 they also started tracing the routes to Rangoon (Yangoon) in disguise. None could catch those who were visiting Satguru Ram Singh secretly and bringing *Hukumnamas* till 1880. The government was in the dark because of their changed names, as Baba Budh Singh was Guru Hari Singh in *Hukumnamas*, as per the strategy of Sri Satguru Ji.

"Write my name as Dyal Singh and Nanu Singh's Kirpal Singh"-*Hukumnama* 13

Sri Satguru ji directed them to remain in touch with Russia. Names were kept secret there too; Russia was Swaroop Singh and the British, Billa Singh.

"He had said while going, that he would come from (Rangoon) Yangoon soon. Then you (Narain Singh) pass on the entire information to him in writing. You must write about Swaroop Singh and Billa Singh" - *Hukumnama*

Kukas used to go to Yangoon in disguise from India. They used to stay at Thakarwadi there, which was known as Shiv Mandir. They would sit near Bahadur Shah Zafar's grave, or under mango trees or near the ascetic saint. After realising the position of guards Sri Satguru Ji, would spread towel to dry, which meant the signal to come closer. Namdhari Sikhs used to go close to his Bungalow at Voilse Road. They would

Speak loudly in Punjabi, which guards could not understand. *Hukamnamas* were thrown out wrapped in cloth and stone from outside (letters) prayers were thrown in. Sri Satguru Ji used to instruct to do meditation say prayers and would tell them not to come to Rangoon because of heavy expenses and inconvenience. There was less interaction and more fear of government terror.

Sri Satguru Ji would give *darshan* at 7 A.M., 12 Noon and in the evening at 4 P.M. by sitting outside the bungalow. He used to go for a stroll on a horse cart 3 to 4 times a week. At that time also Namdhari Sikhs used to have his glimpse. Bahadur Shah's wife Zeenat Mahal lived near his grave with her son. She got a feeling that some emperor, similar to the grandeur of her husband, was detained in the bungalow, but would not converse with him out of fear of government. She would have a glimpse of His divine appearance while going on the horse cart and cursed the British rulers.

Rulers from India would write to Chief Commissioner of Burma that the Sikhs were meeting Guru Ram Singh in Yangon. He was watched closely but none was caught. In 1880 Sri Satguru Ji threw *Hukumnama* from the bungalow for Dhanna Singh Gumtiwala. He was about to slip away after picking it up when policeman Abdulla Khan ran after him and caught him. He was produced in a magistrate's court there itself. However since this place was not under prison act, no action could be taken and Dhanna Singh was sent back to India.

Ishar Singh Ramdasia lived at Sri Bhaini Sahib. He became informer and used to give copies of *Hukumnamas* to DSP Ludhiana Warburton. Satguru Hari Singh expelled him from the *Dera* (Gurdwara) in 1878. On 19 March 1887,

DSP raided Mai Atri and confiscated copies of *Hukumnamas*.

Jaswinder Singh has compiled 63 edicts (*Hukamnamas*) sent by Satguru Ram Singh along with a *Rahitnama*, in the form of a book. About their literary, political, cultural and religious splendour, eminent Punjabi scholars, Dr Harbhajan Singh, Dr S S Noor and Jaswinder Singh wrote valuable and well researched introductions.. These edicts were published by Namdhari Darbar in 1998 by the grace and blessings of Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji.

The British government felt that the guidance the Kukas received through the *Hukamnamas* from the Sri Satguru ji was behind their becoming active again and developing relations with Russia and exiled Maharaja Dalip Singh. It was afraid of another big rebellion. So out of fear, it shifted Sri Satguru Ji from Rangoon to Mergui using ship Ananda on 18 September 1880. Satguru Ji's personal attendants Nanu Singh and Nand Lal were also shifted.

At Rangoon, Sri Satguru Ji used to quarrel with Nanu Singh. At times, he would also beat him. This continued in Mergui also. He told Nanu Singh to go back to Punjab. He came to Punjab enroute Moulmeen and Calcutta on 14 November 1881. He was not allowed to visit Sri Bhaini Sahib, but he came to Sri Bhaini Sahib in disguise several times and told about Guru Ram Singh to Guru Hari Singh.

Due to frequent quarrels with Nanu Singh and beating him, the government started thinking that Sri Satguru Ji had lost his mental balance. The doctors did a check-up, but nothing wrong was found. Nandu cook also said that there was something fishy behind such an action by him. However, people of Mergui were sympathetic to him.

One more event added to his reputation. Mergui's rich

merchant Rangi Ram married thrice, but could not have even one child. He wished and prayed to seek Satguru's blessings for an issue. Agreeing to his humble request, guards allowed him to pay his reverence to Sri Satguru Ji. He came with all three wives to pay their respects. Sri Satguru Ji blessed two of them to have two sons each and one son to the third one. The rich merchant proclaimed about his greatness after being blessed with 5 sons..

The reason to have a strange attitude towards Nanu Singh, was that His Holiness wanted to think and plan alone his political strategy afresh in the wake of *Kukas* improving relations with Russia and Maharaja Dalip Singh.

Baba Gurcharan Singh of Sialkot was an old warrior of Khalsa army. He had become Namdhari when he was in Kabul and Ghazni. He was active in Central Asia. He wrote many letters and told Russian General in Samarkand about the *Kukas*, their strength and power. He delivered letters of 3rd and 27 October 1880 to the general. Government informer, Gulab Khan who conspired with the British, was following Gurcharan Singh's trail. He won confidence of Gurcharan Singh by indulging into anti British talks. He acquired all information and passed it on to the government..

Gulab Khan had given a statement about the activities of Narain Das of Hazro, Mayia and Ram Charan Tola of Gujranwale, Shankar Rai of Haripur etc. Attar Singh Bhadauria was also an informer.

Mihan Singh reached Sri Satguru Ji in Mergui with a similar letter from Russia. As he had served in Hongkong police, he reached Sri Satguru Ji in uniform and handed over the letter from Russia.

Bishan Singh Arora, Buta Singh from Lahore and

Banarasi Das were maintaining contacts with Maharaja Dalip Singh. Banarasi Das frequently visited Agra, Mathura and Meerut. In 1883, rumours were afloat about the arrival of Maharaja in India. Bishan Singh was sent to Russia enroute Tashkent in 1883.

During these days Burma's King Thibu rebelled against the British. The Government detained him in Madras (Chennai) on 29 December 1885. The same day, civil surgeon Mergui wrote to Deputy Commissioner Mergui that political prisoner Guru Ram Singh had expired at 4:30 P.M. because of weakness due to diarrhoea and was cremated on the following day at 8 A.M. But the truth was that Sri Satguru Ji had gone into hiding. If government declared him absconding, the failure of their strict vigil would be known to all.

Proof of Sri Satguru Ji being alive even after that rumour is written in government records itself. As per 1885 Jail records, none of the prisoners died in Mergoi due to diarrhoea. Secondly, Sir Charles Bernard Chief Commissioner of British Burma wrote to Attar Singh Bhadauria the following year on 23 August 1886 that "Ram Singh Kuka is being transferred to a remote place, where communication with him will be less easy."

Alongwith Sri Satguru Ji, other Subas were detained at different places. Suba Sahib Singh had expired in 1879, Suba Jawahar Singh and Suba Pahara Singh in 1882, and Suba Lakha Singh expired in 1903 at Moulmeen. In 1884 Suba Aroor Singh expired in prison itself and Suba Kahn Singh, Suba Man Singh, Suba Hukma Singh, Suba Malook Singh, Suba Brahma Singh were released and sent back to Punjab on the condition that they would not visit Sri Bhaini Sahib and would not indulge in rebellious preaching.

Satguru Hari Singh had started undertaking tours to preach since 1878 with permission from the government. He went to Muktsar on *Maghi* and Damdama on *Vaisakhi*. But many times he had to return on Warburton's orders on complaints by informers. Still Namdhari Sikhs got full spiritual, mental and psychological strength from his visits. The Government had sent a list of 252 dangerous *Kukas* from all districts on 31 December 1880, so that a special vigil may be kept on them.

The Police used to create problems at Sri Bhaini Sahib. Once in January 1883, Genda, a policeman maliciously followed Bhagwan Singh Arbangi. Arbangi went back. Genda followed him. He was accompanied by the Munshi of the post. Arbangi warned him several times but he was greedy for a reward by getting him arrested. Genda did not stop even after crossing Sri Bhaini Sahib's boundary. Rather he hit Arbangi with a stick. Arbangi had a *Khoonda* (a special bamboo stick). He positioned himself and hit *Khoonda* at Genda's temple so forcefully that Genda fell on the ground, and died after having another hit. Munshi ran back out of fear.

Mai Atar Kaur, food incharge (MaisorKhana) used to stay at Sri Bhaini Sahib. On Guru Hari Singh Ji's orders, she received the keys (charge) of the gurudwara from Sant Daan Singh. She approached Suba Khushahal Singh many times and encouraged him to send his daughters, Mata Jeevan Kaur and Mata Fateh Kaur for voluntary services at the *Dera* (Gurudwara). He reached Sri Bhaini Sahib in October 1888 with both his daughters.

On 9 March 1890, Satguru Hari Singh and Mata Ji were blessed with a divine son Satguru Partap Singh. Guru Hari Singh said happily "owner of the house has come, he will be

very powerful and glorious. Mata Ji gave birth to Maharaj Nihal Singh in 1892 and Maharaj Gurdial Singh in 1897. Happiness prevailed all over the Namdhari *Panth*.

Sri Satguru Ji visited Amritsar in 1892. He blessed Sikhs of Amritsar on Diwali festival in 1893 and organised a congregation on 11 September 1897 in memory of Baba Jamiat Singh. In 1898, during the Kar-Sewa (voluntary services) of Ramsar Sarovar, he led the people by lifting heavy pans.

The police did not interfere much by then. The Keys of the *Dera* (monastery) were handed over after taking from Mai Atar Kaur to Mai Gurdei and from her to Mata Jeevan Kaur on 1 August 1899, as desired by Sri Satguru Hari Singh.

After getting permission from the government, Guru Hari Singh organised Hola Mohalla festivals from 1899 to 1905 at Guru Chak, Rori Sahib, Saidowal, Matwi, Gill, Sri Bhaini Sahib etc. Namdhari Sikhs, leaders and followers of the Sri Satguru ji participated with great enthusiasm. There was a huge gathering everywhere. The Hola Mohalla of 1906 was organized at Manawala. He could not go there himself because of eye problem, but sent Mata Ji and his eldest son (Satguru) Partap Singh.

Satguru Hari Singh left for his heavenly abode on 17 May 1906. He told Magha Singh Bilaspur, Surjit Singh Moron and Mahant Sewa Singh "Now you all follow Partap Singh". Accordingly, Satguru Partap Singh was seated on this prestigious spiritual seat (*Gurgaddi*).

Facing atrocities and oppression, the *Kukas* were harassed but they did not let their religious feelings, *Maryada* and political strength die down.

As per 1891 census, *Kukas* were not only the Sikhs, but they were from among the Hindus and *Muslims* also - *Kuka Hindu* 690, *Kuka Sikh* 10541, *Kuka Musalman* – 5.

STRUGGLE FOR INDEPENDENCE

In the early 20th century, the District Gazetteer, Ludhiana appreciated the fact that "the question of Kukas being loyal to the British does not arise" This truth stood rock solid despite continued atrocities by the government and the pressue of its informers. In the background of it was the vital hand of intellectual and spiritual power of the *Kukas* nurtured through meditation and reading of scriptures strictly in accordance with *Maryada*, as ordained by Satguru Ram Singh, besides their physical and mental strength.

To achieve their objective, Sri Satguru Partap Singh started meditation on the banks of Sirhind canal (Neelon) in July 1906. While doing meditation, he said," I do not want to eat stale food and do not want to consume stocked food and exhaust it by consuming it sitting idle." He meditated for a period of 40 days (*Chaliha*), which is in vogue till today in the name of Jap-Prayog".

Kukas were restricted to preach openly against the British. Inspite of this, a process of reformation continued at Sri Bhaini Sahib. Whosoever came to worship as devotee Sikh, he gave up meat and liquor, got fully engrossed in the grandeur of *Naam*, and went back with a zeal for patriotism. Famous patriot Baba Sohan Singh Bhakna got endrenched in the same spirit in the company of Baba Kesar Singh of

Muhawa District Amritsar. He wrote about it in his autobiography:

"From him I developed a taste to be a public servant which rose to the level of extreme devotion in the coming years." -*Meri Jeevan Kahani* .

Bhakna Ji was the President of Gadar Party established in Canada.

Punjab was divided in two factions, one that was loyal towards motherland and another loyal to the government. Wherever there were government excesses, the Kukas would stand up against these even if they were not directly involved. In the late 19th century, it was a case of cow-protection whereas in early 20th century it was against the demolition of wall of Rakabganj Gurdwara in 1914 in New Delhi. Sant Mangal Singh Arshi Farishta led an agitation accompanied by Sardool Singh Kavishar and Bhai Randhir Singh. Arshi Farishta was taken to his native village Fatoohi Chak and put under house arrest. Sri Satguru Partap Singh called a gathering of Sikh *Sangat* at Lahore. Master Tara Singh wrote about it, "He gathered all *sangat* at Lahore at that time. which was unprecedented and was desperately needed. Baba Ji (Sri Satguru Partap Singh) was holding the seat which was blessed by Baba Ram Singh (Guru Ram Singh Ji). He had awakened the Sikh *Panth* at a very crucial moment."

In the Guru Ka Bagh Morcha, Mehtab Singh Namdhari Sahawal (Sialkot) courted arrest.

In 1914, innocents were riddled with government bullets in the Budge-Budge Ghat (Kolkata) agitation. To divert the attention from the protest by the Sikhs, the government tried to get a verdict from the priests and chiefs that those killed were not Sikhs. Sri Satguru Partap Singh called a meeting

of prominent leaders at Hoshiarpur, in which he got the resolution passed that they were Sikhs'. The gathering expressed sympathy with their families.

The marriage of Sri Satguru Ji with '*Bibi Veeran* daughter of Sant Sundar Singh and Mai Ram Kaur of village Gurusar district Ferozepur was solemnised according to *Gursikhi Anand Maryada* on 13th Paus, 1970 Bikrami (December, 1913. She was renamed as Bibi Bhupinder Kaur. She became the world mother.

World War-I broke out in 1914. To win favour with the government and to have land grants, Singh Sabha, Chief Khalsa Diwan, Saints, Mahants and Priests etc. got people recruited. The Congress too sided with the government. Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi incited the people of Gujarat for recruitment. 90,000 Sikhs were recruited in Punjab. On the contrary the response of Sri Satguru Partap Singh to the rulers was, "I will not give you any support" and no *Kuka* got recruited in the army.

The Congress was a moderate patriotic party which was just asking for concessions from the government till then and not independence. However, it was founded in 1885 by consultations with Lord Dufferin. A. O. Hume was its first president. Till 1905 it did not know what to do. Its vision was not clear. From 1905 till 1919, it was still thinking about social, cultural and political aspects only. During that time its radical group started thinking on different lines and Bal Gangadhar Tilak gave the slogan "Independence is my birth right and I will get it". He advocated the use of indigenous goods, *Swadeshi* and boycotted foreign goods. The *Kukas* had already boycotted these goods since 1857.

After World War-I, instead of getting some concessions, on Baisakhi 1919 bullets were fired from 25 guns in the Jallianwala Bagh, Amritsar rally. Those who fired the guns were Sikhs. The Jathedar of Akal Takhat Arur Singh presented a robe of honour and a gold bangle to General O' Dwyer, who had ordered firing.

On the other hand, Ragho Singh Namdhari, who protested against the British, was hanged till death in 1916 at Lahore. A devotee of Sant Kesar Singh Muhavewale (Amritsar) solidier Kehar Singh, who was having sympathy with Namdhari Sikhs had to forego his job for distributing *Sau Sakhi* in army.

In 1919, the Congress turned its focus on independence, non-violence and non-cooperation movement. On 6 June 1920, Indian National Congress adopted 7 point programme: boycott of government schools, colleges, government courts, elections, and foreign goods. Nevertheless, the *Kukas* boycotted the trains and postal system also. It seemed to *Namdhari Sikhs* that by adopting non-cooperation methods of Satguru Ram Singh, independence would be achieved very soon. They also joined them but the Namdhari Sikhs kept their organisation and *Maryada* intact according to Sri Satguru Ji's directions. They performed meditation, remained vegetarian, recited from the scriptures and propogated their mission at fairs and *Hola Mohallas*.

Since 1917, Maharaj Ripudaman Singh of Nabha had been keeping proximity with Namdhari Sikhs due to patriotic feelings. Namdhari Suba Bibi Hukmi (Mai Mahatma) was instrumental in bringing the ruling family nearer to Sikhism and giving rise to patriotic feelings among them. Due to her encouragement, Maharaja very humbly came to the fold of

Sri Satguru Ji and prayed for the blessings of a son, which was fulfilled in 1919. The King invited Sri Satguru Ji for *Naam*. He offered a Rolls Royce car, horses, money, 5,860 *bighas* of land (at Beer Marararhu) to Sri Satguru Ji.

Sri Satguru Ji organised a congregation at village Muthada (Jalandhar) in memory of martyrs of Malerkotla from 17 to 19 January 1920. People from every religion and ideology attended. Sri Satguru Partap Singh was brought into the Palanquin from Phillaur in the form of a procession raising slogans of Sat Sri Akal, Bande Matram, and Allah-hu-Akbar. In this gathering Dr, Saifuddin Kichlu, Kedar Nath Sehgal and Kishan Singh and a number of other leaders were present. The congregation was informed in detail about the atrocities being committed by the British against the Namdhari Sikhs and about the presence of police post at Sri Bhaini Sahib since 1872. Similar conferences were held at Sankhatra and Hoshiarpur also.

The publication of Satjug Weekly was started on Hola Mohalla in 1920. Hola, by the grace of Sri Satguru Ji. Its life and soul was Maharaj Gurdial Singh. Nirankar Singh Chetan and Mangal Singh Arshi Farishta were his assistants. Its objective was to improve amity and brotherhood, highlight Namdhari way of life, history and *Maryada* and to inspire its readers for independence of the country. The tone of *Satjug* and earlier Namdhari writings viz. *Barahmah* of Baba Chanda Singh, writings of Nihal Singh and Kala Singh etc. was anti-imperialist. It was for this reason that soldiers were not allowed to read this paper.

In Namdhari Gurdwara at Sri Bhaini Sahib under seize by the police chowki, Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh was born on Monday, the 22nd November 1920 (8 Maghar), before dawn

to Mata Bhupinder Kaur. Everybody rejoiced the birth of the Satguru.

On Hola Mohalla in 1921, Sri Satguru ji appointed 26 Subas for political and religious activities. Under the leadership of Maharaj Gurdial Singh, Namdhari Darbar was constituted. It had a committee of 31 members. All of them were wise and politically capable.

They organised gatherings at every nook and corner. A Martyr's Conference was organised at village Siarh in 1922. It was resolved in this conference that if police post was not removed from Sri Bhaini Sahib, they would take direct action.

A similar resolution was also passed. The Government reacted sternly and fined Rs 7500/- on the village for allowing the conference to be held there.

In Punjab, activities against the government increased. The Akalis had also begun the Guru Ka Bagh Morcha. The government felt that to retain the police post could be a politically costly affair. Therefore, to segregate the *Kukas* from others, it removed the police post on 12 May 1923. PC Hilton Deputy Commissioner Ludhiana wrote a letter to the Guru Sahib (Satguru Partap Singh) in this regard and asked him not to give asylum to any absconder. The Namdhari Sikhs started breathing in the open air under auspicious blessings of Sri Satguru Ji.

The British rulers dismissed Maharaja of Nabha, Ripudaman Singh for supporting the patriots. The Sikhs flared up when the government hampered the *Akhand Path* at Jaiton Gangsar Gurudwara. They started agitation at Jaiton. To create a division among the Namdhari Sikhs and other Sikhs, Administrator of Nabha, MG Ogelve wrote a letter to Chief Secretary to the Governor of Punjab on 2 August 1922

not to do anything to revoke the rights of the Namdhari Sikhs on the Beerh of Nabha.

This was implemented but Namdhari Sikhs carried on their activities firmly against government atrocities. Through Satjug weekly also they criticised the dismissal of Maharaja Nabha, expressed sympathy with the Jaiton Morcha and courted arrest. There is a reference of imprisonment of Sant Dharam Singh and Sant Buddha Singh of village Chhoti Makhi in government records. The Namdhari Darbar passed a resolution in favour of the agitation and congratulated martyrs' groups on their acts of bravery.

In 1923, Sri Satguru Ji ordered stopping of taking loans for pre-marriage rituals to bring reforms in marriage ceremonies. Marriages would take place only in accordance with *Gurmaryada*. Dowry had already been prohibited.

In the same year, Mata Bhupinder Kaur gave birth to Second child, Maharaj Bir Singh. Mata Ji was not keeping well because of TB and she left for her heavenly abode on 14 September 1924.

Sri Satguru Partap Singh set out secretly from Sri Bhaini Sahib on his own for the independence of the country, to locate Satguru Ram Singh Ji and for seclusion to meditate. His strategy was to meet Rurik, son-in-law of Russian King Czar in his garden near Rohtang pass. After that he wanted to reach Russia enroute China. But due to unfavourable conditions, His Holiness started meditation in the name of God at his place of meditation on the banks of Neelon (Sirhand) canal.

Punjab Congress started an agitation against the British In 1925 from Bredla Hall, Lahore. Sant Nidhan Singh Alim,

Sant Mangal Singh, Pandit Mansha Singh led it and got themselves arrested. Maharaj Gurdial Singh participated in this agitation. He spoke fearlessly and openly about the glorious Namdhari history and the police repression against them in establishing a police post by the government for 50 long years.

In 1927 Sri Satguru Ji organised a conference in memory of martyrs of Malerkotla. Maharaj Gurdial Singh and other leaders spoke about the treacherous and cruel strategies of the government and instilled patriotic feelings among the audience to achieve independence.

After a year, in 1929 the Congress proposed holding a session in Lahore on 29 - 31 December to pass the resolution for complete independence. Maharaj Gurdial Singh had expired. Maharaj Nihal Singh was designated president of Namdhari Darbar. The Sikhs were divided into two factions in the Congress session. Namdhari Sikhs and Gurmukh Singh Chamak, Master Tara Singh, Sardool Singh Kavishar, and Baba Gurdit Singh stood with the Congress. But Baba Kharak Singh was against it. He publicly announced that whoever would go to Congress session was not a Sikh. About 70,000 to 75,000 Sikhs who had come to Lahore from villages became double minded But Baba Gurdit Singh made a public announcement that one who doesn't participate in this programme is not a Sikh. Mata Jeevan Kaur managed Langar for all of them from Namdhari *Panth* as per direction of Sri Satguru Partap Singh. On reaching Lahore, Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru was led by Maharaj Nihal Singh, Mangal Singh Arshi Farishta, S. Atma Singh and S. Daya Singh and others on hundred horses in pure Namdhari dress. A resolution of complete independence was passed unanimously. Kuka

Congress group came into existence during that period. *The Satjug Weekly* published from Sri Bhaini Sahib (Punjab) carried news items about this session.

Thereafter, the struggle against British rulers intensified and government also became more vigilant. It put into jail every leader who spoke against the British. Bredla Hall Lahore was the centre of Congress activities. The patriots started filling the jails from there. With inspiration from Pt Mansha Singh groups of singers would sing to the accompaniment of drums and cymbels on the roads of Lahore the lyric:

-Chuck Lai Firangia Dera, Toon Kar Lia Raj Bathera.

"Oh Firangi, get out of this country, you have already ruled it enough."

The patriotism of Namdhari Sikhs was a symbol of fearlessness and sacrifice. Shaheed Bhagat Singh and others like him who had joined the revolution and took patriotism to the hilt were impressed by the Namdhari Panth of Satguru Ram Singh. They wrote that justice was not done to this Panth and photographs of Guru Ram Singh should be distributed among others for inspiration. After his martyrdom in 1931, Satguru Partap Singh sent Sant Mangal Singh to console his family. He stayed there for many days. He would narrate the valiant tales of the martyrs.

To encourage the art of *Gurmat* music and use of string instruments, Sri Satguru Ji proposed a Sangeet Sammelan in Assu (October) in 1933. In its panel of judges was Bhai Kahn Singh Nabha and among the prominent persons present in the Sammelan were Baba Sawan Singh Radhaswami Beas, Sri Sahib Maharaj Ji Dyal Bagh Agra, Master Tara Singh, Bhai Arjan Singh Bagrian, S Joginder Singh, Dr Gokul Chand Narang and Principal Ganga Singh.

In the same year Sri Satguru Ji made arrangements for the tour of Thailand with disciples, preachers and *Gurbani* reciters. While camping at Kolkata, he unified two groups of Sikhs. From there, he reached Rangoon (Burma), (now called Yangon in Myanmar) by sea. Everybody became sentimental by having a glimpse of the bungalow where Sri Satguru Ram Singh was detained. The Sikh gurudwara was locked due to differences between the civilians and the army. Sri Satguru Ji resolved their differences and got the gurudwara opened for the *Sangat*. On reaching Chiangmai (Thailand), he was given a red carpet welcome by Namdhari and non-Namdhari Sikhs, Hindus and Muslims. In Bangkok, leaders of all sects and faiths, i.e. the Singh Sabha, Hindu Maha Sabha, Sanatan Dharam, Arya Samaj, Jamaat-ul-Islam, Indian Chambers of Commerce came to have a glimpse of the Sri Satguru ji. They were led by a caravan of 100 cars.

To resolve the differences among the Sikhs, His Holiness organised a *Guru Nanak Naam Leva Conference* of all sects at Sri Bhaini Sahib on 14-15 October 1934. Some of them put a condition that they would not participate if *ardas* (prayer) of 12 Gurus was performed. Sri Satguru Ji granted permission for prayer of 10 Gurus for the sake of unity. Bhai Arjan Singh Bagrian used to perform the prayer. However the prayer at the time of Asa Di Vaar continued to be for 12 Gurus as per Namdhari discipline. In this conference, leaders of all sects (Mandals, Panths, Sabhas, Takhts) who followed Guru Nanak Dev participated. It was decided that *Gurbani* preaching must be propagated and all should preach in a positive manner without criticising the other sects. Unity must prevail and if there were law suits, those must be decided by sitting together across the table. An executive committee was formed and Gurmukh Singh Musafir was designated as its

convener. The next session of the conference was held at Gujranwala on 19 to 22 April, 1935. In the same year it was ordained by Sri Satguru Ji that in future the weddings of young couples should be solemnized during festivals only.

Satjug's special Basant issue of 1936 and Sant Khalsa poetry book by Harnam Singh Bagliwala were confiscated for presenting Namdhari history in the right perspective and not towing the government line.

Elections were held in all provinces of the country in 1937. The Namdhari Sikhs voted as per the direction of Sri Satguru Ji. However after the election results, in accordance with the situation that emerged, a decision was taken to support the Congress in the freedom struggle. There was difference of opinion whether wedding couple should move in a clockwise or anti-clockwise direction at the time of marriage. It was ordained that moving around anti clockwise was logical and correct.

In the same year, Punjab government sent a proposal to central government to establish a mechanised slaughter house. Over 1,000 animals were to be slaughtered daily in the slaughter house.

To stop this, Sri Satguru Ji used spiritual power. 500 men were told to do a continuous *Hawan - Yag of Chandi-di-Vaar* from 9 to 18 September 1937 at Sri Bhaini Sahib. Ghee was poured down the altar in a continuous flow. The congregation, *Sadh Sangat* performed 1,27,000 recitations of Chandi Di Vaar in complete devotion and *Maryada*. Naturally its heat reached the government too. It was aware of the nature of Namdhari Sikhs about being sages as well as warriors. So it declared not to open the abattoir. The *Sadh Sangat* rejoiced over it.

At the instigation by the Britishers, the Muslims began the scuffle of Shaheed Gunj, Lahore. All Namdhari Sikhs were ordered to stand with the *panth*. The elections to the Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee were due in January 1938. It was published in the *Satjug* that efforts should be made for a compromise among candidates in a constituency, but if it could not be possible then help be extended in every respect, so as to ensure victory of the Akali Party candidates.

State People's conference was held at Ludhiana on 17 February 1939. Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru and Sri Satguru Ji led the procession on horse backs. Master Tara Singh, Dr. Saifuddin Kichlu, Pattabhi Sitaramiah participated enthusiastically. To make this conference a success, Namdhari Sikhs were very active. Next day all leaders visited Sri Bhaini Sahib at the invitation of Sri Satguru Ji. S. Atma Singh, Sant Nidhan Singh Alim, S Daya Singh, Sant Inder Singh Chakarvarty led them. They were informed about the Namdhari history and about the historical places viz *Kranti Mandar, Loh Langar, Akal Bunga*. Jawaharlal Nehru and many other leaders heaved a sigh of disdain listening about the government atrocities. A welcome meeting was organised in which Alam Ji read out the scroll of honour.

World War - II had begun, Sri Satguru Ji ordered all Namdhari Sikhs not to join the army or help the government in any other manner.

The Government had begun arresting all patriotic leaders. S Teja Singh Sutantar, Sohan Singh Josh, Ratan Singh, Kishan Singh, Master Mota Singh used to take help and shelter from Sri Satguru Ji while in hiding.

Neta Ji Subhash Chandra Bose went to Japan incognito.

He created Azad Hind Fauz (Indian National Army). When he made Thailand (Siam) as his centre of activities, Seth Gurbaksh Singh Pritam son of Seth Phoola Singh shouldered the responsibility as supply secretary. Seth Tarlok Singh was his driver.

In 1942, the country was undergoing ideological changes. Mahatma Gandhi gave the slogan 'British Quit India'.

Sri Satguru Ji held a conference at Shimla to discuss about the development of mother tongue Punjabi. Bhai Arjan Singh Bagrian was designated as its president and Abdul Majid secretary. The resolutions, broadcast in Punjabi from Delhi and Lahore radio stations and implementation of teaching of Punjabi up to university level, were passed in it. On 9 March 1943 Mata Jeevan Kaur left for her heavenly abode. Each and every eye was wet in her memory.

On the occasion of Holi festival on 20 March 1943, Sri Satguru Ji organised a Hindu-Sikh reconciliation conference. Harmony, cow-protection and use of swadeshi goods were the main themes.

It seemed that after World War – II, Britishers would quit India. That was the reason that the demand for partition was started by the Muslim Community. Viceroy Lord Wavell called a meeting of Congress, Muslim League, Akali Dal and other political parties on 25th June 1945 to find a positive solution. Sri Satguru Ji stayed at the residence of Sant Jaswant Singh for first hand knowledge about the conference. He was standing in the balcony at that time, it started drizzling. Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru and Maulana Azad took shelter there. They expressed their concern about partition and were eager to know what Sri Satguru Ji wanted. Sri Satguru Ji said, "I'll sign on blank paper that we don't want anything. We just

want that the nation should attain independence.” They were very happy to hear this.

Sri Satguru Ji's farsightedness sensed the delicate situation that partition was going to take place. *Majha* would be partitioned. He thought of buying the land in Teshil Sirsa District Hissar for the Sikhs, which he had seen once while going from Punjab to Rajasthan. On a collection of Rs. 5,500 per *Murabba* (25 Acres) from the Sikhs, he assigned the responsibility of maintaining the accounts to Baba Ji (Satguru Jagjit Singh) and Master Balwant Singh. 12,430 acre land of villages Chuchal kotli (Sri Jiwan Nagar), Jag Malera (Sant Nagar), Alipur (Haripur) and Kanjran Wala (Damdama) was bought.

On Hola festival of Shekhupura Bedad in 1947, His Holiness asked the Sikhs to at least cross river Ravi and come to the other side. Fearing that the Sikhs may not be diligent, he went to each and every village and city and sent Baba Ji (Satguru Jagjit Singh) to tell the Sikhs to give up attachment to their homes. Those who abided the order did not get even a scratch during the partition of 1947. They thanked Sri Satguru Ji for protecting them.

REHABILITATION AND SOCIAL UPLIFT

15 August 1947 brought independence for India but it brought devastation for millions of Indians, especially Punjabis and Bengalis. It is the people who suffer and pay a huge price whenever there is a change of guard. People had to leave their homes. Muslims had to go to Pakistan and Hindu-Sikhs had to come to India. Pakistan was carved out of India. The movement of the people did not happen smoothly. Some anti-social elements plundered, dishonoured women and damaged life and property.

To protect his disciples from this holocaust, Sri Satguru Ji had already ordained on the Hola festival in 1947 held at Shekhupura Bedad, Gujranwala district, that it would be safer if they could cross river Beas but at least they must cross Ravi. He himself went and later sent Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji to Layalpur, Montgomery, Lahore districts, persuading the Sikhs to leave with their families and essential articles. Those who obeyed escaped the loss of life and property. Others barely managed to escape from the clutches of death. Some could not even save themselves.

Expressing his apprehensions about loss in future, Sri Satguru Ji insisted on Mahatma Gandhi at Balmiki temple, Delhi to use his influence to avoid partition. He did not care

and replied that all loss of life and property would be made up. Sri Satguru ji said again furiously, "If someone dishonours those women on whose shoulders you walk, how their honour would be protected?" Mahatma quietly said, "That is right".

Sri Satguru Ji had already bought the land in Sri Jiwan Nagar area, district Hissar (now Sirsa) for rehabilitation of the Sikh families. After getting registration done, he conducted 101 Akhand Paths at Sri Jiwan Nagar (Chuchat Kotli) even before partition. The Sikhs started settling there, community kitchen and Langar began, and meditation process started which impacted nearby villages of Bagri Hindus and Muslims. But Kalyug had stepped in even before enjoying the benefits of this land. During Basant festival at Lahore in 1947, Baba Jaimal Singh of Manga (Tamboli ka khuh) requested Sri Satguru Ji that as had been said by The Gobind-Almighty God, "These Sikhs will quarrel among themselves, will also have no faith in you." Sri Satguru Ji replied, "We'll face it when it comes". After the disturbances, Sri Satguru Ji got busy supporting and consoling the Sikhs.

Satguru Ji made arrangements for food and clothings at Amritsar, Sri Bhaini Sahib, and Sri Jiwan Nagar for the people who migrated from Pakistan. He advised the Sikhs to be careful about the Muslims and maintain harmony with Hindus. Government of India had carried out a districtwise rehabilitation plan for those Punjabis who crossed over to India from Pakistan. However, Sri Satguru Ji got permission from Dr. Mohinder Singh Randhawa, chief of rehabilitation department for all Namdhari Sikhs to settle down in Hisar district. If someone wanted to settle down somewhere else he was free to do so. That's why some families settled down at Mandi (Himachal Pradesh), Jammu or other places. Some even went to Patna (Bihar) and Thailand. Along with

rehabilitation, Sri Satguru Ji was worried about those families also, who could not manage to come from Pakistan. On 28 April 1950, he said, "Our 20,000 daughters are still there." He wanted to bring them to India.

Famous patriot and leader of Gadar Party Baba Sohan Singh Bhakna wrote about the contribution of the Namdhari Sikhs in the struggle for independence said, "Place the sacrifices of Namdharis for independence in a pan of the weighing scale and place rest of India's in the other. If these are not more, these shall not be lesser."

Braving the wounds of partition, the Namdhari Sikhs started settling down on their own feet. As majority of the Namdhari Sikhs were in Sri Jiwan Nagar area, Sri Satguru Ji made arrangements for regular meditation organising Hola festivals of 1948, 1949, 1954, and 1955 in the same area at Sant Nagar or Nakaura village. Meditation strengthened Namdhari Sikhs spiritually. Where ever he went, he encouraged the *sangat* for extending support and help to the migrants. Peasants were given their due share of land and non-peasant poor Sikhs were given land free of cost. Those landless tillers, who were troubled by landlords in Pakistan, were allotted lands in village Pratap Nagar and Santanwali. The claims for lands from Pakistan were also settled in this area. After independence Prime Minister and Ministers of Union Government, Chief Ministers and Ministers of states were from amongst the Indians. When ministers like Partap Singh Kairon, visited the Namdhari Sikhs, he even said, "O Kukas! You were absolutely right, this pen is your's."

Pandit Nehru and other political leaders used to respect and regard Sri Satguru Ji because of his lofty ideals, spiritual personality and being creator of a glorious history. The Central

government formed a cow protection committee. Among its 10 members, Sri Satguru Ji was also designated after taking his due permission. On the occasion of prize distribution in a cattle show in 1952, President of India, Dr Rajendra Prasad said, "If someone wants to learn cow breeding, he should learn it from Maharaj Partap Singh."

A democratic process began in accordance with the constitution of India, when first general elections were held in 1952. Sant Atma Singh of Rawalpindi, on the direction of Sri Satguru Ji, contested the Lok Sabha election and won from Sirsa constituency on the Congress party ticket. Maharaj Nihal Singh was nominated to the Rajya Sabha and S Teja Singh was made a member of Legislative Council of Punjab. Although Sri Satguru Ji was not directly involved in the government, yet it was always his desire that the Congress candidates, who won with Namdhari support, must be impartial, well wishers of the people, patriots and freedom fighters.

If the Congress put up a candidate of divergent nature, violating norms laid down by the Sri Satguru Ji, it was to be ensured that such a candidate was defeated. That's why Devi Lal lost the election to Legislative Assembly from Sirsa constituency. Its effect on the Congress was rather contrary. Its disposition did not remain as courteous towards Sri Satguru Ji and Namdhari Sikhs as it used to be earlier. It tried its level best to divide the Guru's family and Namdhari Sikhs of Sri Jiwan Nagar area and was successful to turn away a few of them. Despite this, the organisation did not split, though a crack developed.

In Sri Jiwan Nagar area, Sri Satguru Ji allocated due share of land to each landlord. In this allotment, the allocation

of land under claims was also included. On the direction of Sri Satguru Ji, S. Teja Singh, Avtar Singh Jhabbar Kariwala and Karam Singh Patwari maintained liaison with the head of rehabilitation department at Jalandhar to get the claims of the Sikhs approved. As a result of their efforts, without much cost and hassles, the land of Namdhari Sikhs was allotted in Sri Jiwan Nagar area. Sri Satguru Ji got technical help from Sardool Singh and Mange Ram Patwari for allotment and allotment was done accurately.

The provoked people of village Kariwala got the allocation done by the government authorities. As a result eastern population was allocated land towards west and western population towards east. They had to go in opposite directions for tilling the land and raising crops in their farms. Sri Satguru Ji advised them to be on the path of religion and patience. He also graced the Sikhs living in different parts of the world by allowing them to have his *darshan*.

He blessed the Namdhari Sikhs of Bangkok, Thailand by holding Hola festival there in 1950. Although his Hola festival visits were scheduled on 4-5 March, Sri Satguru Ji visited them alongwith his sons and disciples on 22 February 1950 and blessed them. Satguru Ji preached the Sikhs to observe high moral values by narrating to them the life stories of faithful and patient Sikhs. He had blessed the *sangat* in November-December 1948 also.

In the religious discourse on 9 February 1951 at Bangkok, he talked about the devastation in India by floods and draught and said "the people don't have anything to eat or wear, animals do not get fodder, If you help them (by sending money). Satguru shall help you even more."

The Namdhari sangat had settled in Thailand (Bangkok) since the beginning of the 20th century. Namdhari Sikhs were becoming affluent by working hard. Their population was also growing. Sri Satguru Ji used to visit Thailand and give *darshan* to his devotees from time to time since 1933.

With the blessings of the Sri Satguru ji, Sikhism reached Africa in the fourth decade of the 20th century. Suba Lal Singh had settled there. On the request of his son Chanan Singh and other Sikhs, Sri Satguru Ji visited Africa with his disciples in April-May 1953. After staying in Bombay for a few days and preaching meditation of *Naam* he visited several cities in East Africa, Kenya, Uganda and Tanganyika. Prominent cities were Mumbasa, Karicho, Kasumo, Nakoro, Aldorate, Magadhi, Jinja, Kampala, Mubali, Arusha, Moshi and Nairobi. Devout Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims used to come in big numbers to have his *darshan* and to listen to recitation from the scriptures and religious anecdotes. They enjoyed the devotional *Kirtan* of Sant Darshan Singh and Khazan Singh who accompanied Sri Satguru Ji. They got impressed by the speeches and *Kirtan* of Sant Nidhan Singh Alam and enjoyed the speeches of Pt Gopal Singh. Sri Satguru Ji had his own arrangements for food. He never took any food from any meat-eater household. If someone gave up liquor and non-vegetarian food and got him baptised then would eat in that house. In every city many Sikhs became his disciples. Sri Satguru Ji returned to India by air in mid May leaving behind Suba Dasaundha Singh and Pritam Singh of Paddi for preaching. A few Sikhs went to Africa by sea and returned by the same route. Sri Satguru Ji fulfilled the desire of the Sikhs of East Africa by giving them *darshan* again from 14 November to 24 December 1953

Even though Sri Satguru Ji visited various places to preach Sikhism, he blessed the mammoth gatherings of Hola festival at Sri Bhaini Sahib, Ludhiana (Punjab), Mandi (Himachal Pradesh) and Tahla Sahib (Mansa, Punjab) but Sri Jiwan Nagar remained his centre. He was worried about some selfish persons, instigating resentment in the hearts of simple folk. Ghasita Singh who was once a staunch follower of Sri Satguru Ji turned an opponent. Labh Singh Kakka had also waived from the faith. This happened due to the ill-designs of politicians. Jawahar Lal Nehru and Partap Singh Kairon also did not keep their relation and respect towards Sri Satguru Ji in the same manner as before. S Atma Singh M.P. expired on 7th January, 1954.

The rulers of PEPSU refused to recognise Namdhari Sikhs' possession on the Bhamarasi Beer, (Nabha) which was presented to Sri Satguru Ji by Maharaja of Nabha. Herds were let loose there to graze and auction was ordered. The attitude of the government remained negative although Chief Ministers kept on changing from Raghubir Singh to Gian Singh Rarewala till Brishbhan. A case had to be registered in civil court of Fatehgarh with the help of Sri Satguru Ji. Auction was cancelled by the order of the Judge on 30 May 1955. Final ruling came in favour of Namdhari Sikhs on 14 June 1956 at Kapurthala. In this suit the statement of Maharani Sarojini Devi of Nabha was very important. Land and other presents were given to Sri Satguru Ji on the occasion of birth of a male child to the Maharani.

Labh Singh Kakka was murdered in 1955 in Sri Jiwan Nagar area due to factionalism. The needle of suspicion was on Kandhara Singh, but he was acquitted by the court.

In the second general elections of India in 1957, a non-Congress candidate was elected as MLA from Sirsa constituency with the support of Namdhari Sikhs who voted for him as wished by Sri Satguru Ji. On the one hand, the power of Sri Satguru Ji's order was established while on the other, factionalism escalated. Anti-Guru faction used Ghasita Singh as the weapon. Once Sri Satguru Ji had treated him among his confidants but he snapped his relations with him. Sri Satguru Ji had allocated the land among the Sikhs and it was transferred also, if needed. Despite this transfer, throwing the papers in the dust bin and considering that government workers were on his side, Ghasita Singh Harni went there to forcibly occupy land and tilled the land at Sant Nagar on 20 May 1958. The land belonged to Bhagat Hazara Singh and Santokh Singh. However, under the instructions of Sri Satguru Ji Sikh *Sangat* sat in the arable land with rosaries in their hands and he could not do anything and was left repenting. As a result of factionalism, Ghasita Singh was murdered on 21 July 1958. The needle of suspicion pointed towards Kandhara Singh, but the murder case was filed against Avtar Singh, Amar Singh, Gurdip Singh, besides Baba (Maharaj) Bir Singh.

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh approached Jawaharlal Nehru and S. Partap Singh Kairon, the then Chief Minister of Punjab to withdraw the name of his innocent younger brother Baba Bir Singh from the case, but they turned a deaf ear. Maharaj Ji had to present himself at court in Sirsa on 11 August 1958. He was arrested. He was detained for 8 months in prisons of Sirsa or Ferozepure and was released on 29 April 1959. Only sky was the limit to the joy of the *Sadh Sangat*. They were happy. Sri Satguru Ji heaved a sigh of relief. Of the rest,

Kandhara Singh was sentenced to death by hanging and other 3 were awarded life imprisonment. Maharaj Ji expressed his gratitude towards the *Sangat* by writing, "By overlooking my weaknesses, the meditation, prayers which *Sadh Sangat* had carried out for my release can not be counted. I can't repay it."

Although evil was defeated in this case, yet authorities did not accept it. They just wanted to bring Sri Satguru Ji to his knees and wanted to spread the web for this purpose. Like every ruler, they were using undue brute force. The government felt too proud of its momentary win over Sri Satguru Ji. 14 civil cases were filed against Sri Satguru Partap Singh. The entire Namdhari Panth was hurt. Complainants knew very well that their cases were false even then they wanted Sri Satguru Ji to be produced in the court. The opponents did not want any lawyer or any representative to represent Sri Satguru Ji. They declared a date on which he himself was to be present and give his statement. Sri Satguru Ji had decided not to present himself in an errant court. From time to time he began indicating about the personality who would lead Namdhari Sikhs after him.

On 26 Vaisakh 2016 (May 1959), he told the representatives and workers of the *Dera* (Gurudwara):

"From today onwards, whosoever wants to be under the orders of Jagjit Singh, he can stay there, others may leave the place and go back from wherever they have come."
(Jass Jeevan Part 6)

On 27 Vaisakh 2016 at Sirsa, when Sri Satguru Ji was asked by the Sikhs regarding Gurudwara elections, he said, "Ask my elder son."

At Sri Bhaini Sahib, when he was not keeping well, he

told Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji, "My son, the Paths (Scripture readings) which have been initiated for the Darshan of Satguru Ram Singh, must be completed, even if everything has to be sold." (Jass Jeevan part 6)

(Similar words are recorded in the books of Inder Singh Chakarvarty and Pritam Singh Kavi namely *Atal Partapi* and *Beete Diyan Pairan*).

Satguru Partap Singh left for his heavenly abode in the early morning at 12:30 A.M. on 22 August 1959, couple of days before the date to present him in court. It became pitch dark for Sikh *Sangat*; it appeared as if lightening had struck. They began wailing and crying their heart out. He was cremated in the evening with wet eyes.

Next day on 23 August 1959, in the early morning during *Asa Di Vaar*, Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji, seated on the *Gurgaddi*, began enlightening the Namdhari world. Maharaj Nihal Singh, Baba Jang Singh, Maharaj Bir Singh, Sant Inder Singh Chakarvarty, Bhai Wazir Singh, Sant Ratan Singh were the first to bow before His Holiness and then rest of the *Sangat* followed.

On 10 September 1959, at the *antim ardas* ceremony in memory of Satguru Partap Singh, a mammoth gathering turned up. A large number of religious, political and social leaders, representatives of newspapers and Sikh *Sangat* joined in paying homage to the departed Satguru ji. On this day, in the words of Maharaj Bir Singh, "Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji was presented a turban (robe of honour) on behalf of Namdhari *Sangat* by Satguru Partap Singh's personal attendant Bhai Wazir Singh."

— Namdhari and Congress

Turbans (robe of Honour) were presented to Sri Satguru Ji by prominent organisations and sects which included, Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee, Radhaswami, Beas and Agra sects, Sanatan Dharam Sabha, Nirmal Maha Mandal, Udaseen Maha Mandal, Sewa Panthi, Addan Shahi, etc. Prominent persons were Bhai Sahib Bhai Ardaman Singh Bagrian, Giani Zail Singh, Maharaja Yadvinder Singh of Patiala, Gian Singh Rarewala, Lala Hardev Sahai, JN Mankar, S Bhagwant Singh Hari, Families of Ghumanda and panchayats having faith and reverence towards Guru. After tying the turban, His Holiness stood up and gave *darshan* to those present. The gathering paid their respects to the Sri Satguru ji from their seats with great devotion and enthusiasm.

On 10 September 1959, the gathering in honour of Sri Satguru Ji which included, prominent persons paid homage to Satguru Partap Singh and also expressed their gratitude towards Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji and congratulated him on being enthroned on the *Gurgaddi*. In the words of Master Tara Singh: "Now I congratulate Baba Jagjit Singh Ji and pray that may God bless him with prosperity for ever." S Swaran Singh said, "I am hopeful that Maharaj Jagjit Singh Ji will follow the path shown by the previous Maharaj and will work for the nation and the community." Giani Zail Singh's respectful words were, "Today congratulating Maharaj Jagjit Singh Ji, I'll request that this seat is not only for sages and holy men, but it has brought a revolution in India. This seat had created ripples of revolution. Maharaj Jagjit Singh Ji your responsibilities have increased, you have to give a lead and protect the nation from dangers."

Pt. Yagdutt Sharma said, "I offer my tributes to that

soul, who has maintained his dignity and grandeur in Maharaj Jagjit Singh Ji."

Bhai Ardaman Singh Bagrian paid his tributes by saying that "I expect that Maharaj Jagjit Singh Ji will fulfil the vacuum created by the demise of spiritual power of Maharaj Partap Singh Ji."

Maharaj Kirpal Singh Radhaswami said," I have deep respect for him (Satguru Partap Singh) and I am happy that Maharaj's life will inspire Baba Jagjit Singh Ji."

JN Mankar and Lala Hardev Sahai expressed the hope that Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji would continue to give protection to the cow.

For the followers, the same soul had reappeared, but in a different body. The beginning of welfare had already taken place, to get rid of disease and mourning. They expressed their faith in Sri Satguru Ji.

12 years since independence, despite changing political and social scenario, the Namdhari Sikhs managed to stand on their own feet with the auspicious support and guidance of Sri Satguru Ji. They resided not only in different villages and cities of India, but in the countries of East Africa and Thailand also. Satguru Partap Singh blessed the *sangat* of these areas till 1959. He organised last Hola festival at Kampala (Uganda) in 1959. They had started looking for new horizons for their progress.

CONSOLIDATION AND EXPANSION

The circumstances, under which Satguru Partap Singh had to leave for his heavenly abode, had brought depression and dejection in the minds of dedicated Sikhs. They were compelled to think how the sect (Panth) will come out of this difficult situation created by some misguided Sikhs at the provocation of others. How will Sri Satguru Ji resolve this crisis?

Sri Satguru Ji, looking at the sad faces of the Sikhs, could understand their mental state of agony, worry and dejection. How difficult was it for him to bring happiness back to the *Panth*? First of all, he invited writers to bring awareness and consciousness among the people. He opined in his first public address during the 3rd All India Writers Conference at Ludhiana on 3 October 1959:

"The writers have a big responsibility – They have to educate the people, impart knowledge to them and encourage them. They should produce literature which may strengthen moral values of the common man. The weak, feeble and down trodden may feel encouraged so that our nation can progress and its respect among other countries increases."

This direction was for Namdhari writers also. At that time Inder Singh Chakarvarty, Taran Singh Vahimi, Mangal Singh Layalpuri, Pritam Singh Kavi, historian Bishan Singh and

Amar Bharti were among the prominent Namdhari authors. Kavi Ji was the editor of Satjug and Bharti Ji and Layalpuri Ji of Nawan Hindustan. All others were freelance writers.

The meditation, politeness, firmness, foresightedness and patience of Sri Satguru Ji made false cases die their own death. At a Punjabi *Samagam* (function) on 8 to 10 September 1960, by showing his kindness and forgiveness, he announced that all the misguided Sikhs were pardoned. This *soothed* the hearts of those who were misguided. *Sadh Sangat's* hearts were thrilled with joy and their quench of Sri Satguru Ji's *Darshan* was satisfied. Visits of Sri Satguru Ji in Hola festival at different places viz. Sri Ganga Nagar, Sri Bhaini Sahib, Baja Khana (Faridkot), Sant Nagar and Kumbh festival at Baisakhi in 1962 at Haridwar in Uttar Pradesh and at some other places in Rajasthan and Punjab, enlightened the people and thrilled them with joy. On these occasions, more people embraced Sikhism. Lectures by Pt. Gopal Singh used to be very effective in this regard.

There was a U-turn in the attitude of leaders in political circle also. Sri Satguru Ji saw 3 cars parked by the road side near Jamalpur once while returning from Ludhiana to Sri Bhaini Sahib with his followers by car. He stopped to lend a helping hand, if there was any problem with these cars. However, from the nearby millet fields, S. Partap Singh Kairon, Chief Minister Punjab emerged. He was returning after answering the nature's call. He came towards Sri Satguru Ji, expressed his regards by bowing down and said, "You do not come to meet me." Sri Satguru Ji replied, "One can meet only if the situation is conducive for it". Later he visited Chandigarh at the invitation of Kairon. From the conversation there, Sardar Kairon realised that injustice was being done to the Namdhari Sikhs. He repented over it. Abiding by the

wishes of Sri Satguru Ji, he visited Baja Khana (Faridkot) on 24 March 1962 on Hola Mohalla and Sri Jiwan Nagar on 13 June 1962 during animal fair to end the differences and said so in appropriate words.

Due to heavy rains in the mountains, river Ghaghar passing through Sri Jiwan Nagar area was flooded. People of different villages stood on the embankments on both sides, so that there should not be any loss if it breaches. Sri Satguru Ji visited them to keep them in high spirits and advised them to raise embankments by piling earth on it. As a result of this, the bitterness created by the fear of any deliberate breach of the embankment by the people from the other side ceased. No one breached the embankment, rather strengthened it.

On the occasion of Hola festival at Sant Nagar (Sirsa) in 1963, in the presence of Central Government Minister Shri Ram Subhag Singh, S. Teja Singh (of Khuh Amritsarian area, Sri Jiwan Nagar) admitted that the suits filed against Satguru Partap Singh and his aides were false. Those were filed out of envy, enmity and for revenge. They repented over their act. With this, the picture became clear and the Sikhs who had come from home and abroad on Hola festival heaved a sigh of relief.

In June 1963, a simpleton village Khote, District Firozepore (now Moga) snatched media headlines the world over. Anand Karaj centenary was celebrated there on 3rd June. Satguru Ram Singh had initiated *Gurmat Anand Maryada* from this village, 100 years ago. He had organized, for the first time without dowry, inter-caste mass marriages of 6 couples. The couples, after having head to toe bath were given *Amrit*, took four rounds of the holy fire, amidst recital of *Lavan* from Sri Adi Granth Sahib for solemnizing marriage ceremony. On centenary celebrations, Sri Satguru Ji

solemnised 149 mass Marriages in the same *Maryada*. It was praised throughout the world.

During these days the relations of Namdhari Sikhs were strengthened with the new ruler of Kenya. Kenya became independent and Jomo Kaniata became its first President. Sri Satguru Ji sent his best wishes through a letter on 9 January 1963.

During his visit in 1959, Satguru Partap Singh had anticipated that Kenya would be independent within 10 years. Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji's following words were published on 16 May 1962 by East African Standard newspaper. "They are expecting that African people would achieve independence by my next visit," It was believed that the blessings of the Satguru had borne fruit. He had visited Kenya and Uganda in April-May 1962. Sri Satguru Ji had earlier visited the *Sangat* and people of Thailand, Japan and Hong Kong in 1961. In the following years 1963-64 also, Namdhari Sikhs of Thailand, East African countries viz Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania accorded a red carpet welcome to Sri Satguru Ji.

Political leaders of India had great regard towards Namdhari Sikhs and Sri Satguru Ji due to their association with the freedom struggle. They felt proud of attending their functions. Full cooperation was extended to the government in nation building. Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and Home Minister Gulzari Lal Nanda specially attended the Basant festival, celebrated in the auspicious presence of Sri Satguru Ji at Delhi in 1964.

After the death of Jawaharlal Nehru on 27 May 1964, Lal Bahadur Shastri was elected Prime Minister of India. Sri Satguru Ji gave a message for extending all help to Shastri Ji leaving aside all worries, problems and regional thinking.

The Namdhari Sikhs are not only cow protectors but

also rear the cow. Their cows were healthy and gave more milk. At Sri Bhaini Sahib, besides the stables, there were Gaushalas (Charitable stable for cows). They used to participate in animal fairs from time to time. In the competitions in 1962 organised by central council of cow Protection (Samvardhan), Government of India, a cow reared in a Namdhari cowshed named Putli of Sahiwal breed won the first prize by yielding 21 Kg milk daily. The second place was won by the cow Naulakhi by yielding 20 Kg milk. As Putli gave more milk than any other cow, Sri Satguru Ji was conferred Gopal Ratan medal on 23 March 1965 by Government of India. A cow protection conference (Go Samvardhan Sammelan) was held at Hyderabad (Andhra Pradesh) from 21 to 23 March 1965. Governmental and non-governmental organisations participated. On the inaugural day, Chief Minister of the state K Brahmananda Reddy welcomed thousands of guests. Central Food and Agricultural Minister, C Subramaniam delivered a speech about caring of cow breeds. This conference was inaugurated by Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri.

During the same year, daily newspaper of Namdhari Sikhs *Nawan Hindustan* created a special place for itself in journalism. This paper was earlier a weekly but in 1962, it was made a daily paper.

Satjug was a weekly. Its operational area was religious, social and literary. It was the mouthpiece of the Namdhari Sikhs. *Nawan Hindustan* had a special place in the entire political, social and religious circles especially because of its editorials by Layalpuri ji or Bharti Ji. Both papers used to follow the strategy guided by Sri Satguru Ji.

Although the preachings and practice of mediation and *Rahit Maryada* of Namdhari Sikhs was a continuous process,

still realising the need to organise Namdhari youth, Sri Satguru Ji blessed them personally. He called for their gathering on 1st September, 1962. His Secretary Gurdev Singh wrote letters especially as per His directions. After this gathering, many important meetings were held. In 1964 a meeting was held at Mandi and the following year from 29 May to 6 June, a convention was held in the auspicious presence of His Holiness. Thus the process started rolling with zeal and enthusiasm.

In the early sixties, activities of Namdhari Sikhs made inroads in another field. That was peace movement. Though Namdhari Sikhs had always remained peace-loving, but in these years their activities towards peace spread to regional, national and international levels. Sri Satguru Ji consented to be the President of Haryana Punjab branch of World Peace Council. Very succesful conventions were held in Japan, Pakistan and Finland. In India conventions were held at Amritsar, Hyderabad and Delhi.

At Delhi, a convention was held during Namdhari Hola Mahalla of 1966. It was attended by the President of the Council, Isabul Baloom, its Secretary Ramesh, Chairman of Gandhi Peace Council Dr RR Diwakar, US ambassador Chester Bowles and Aruna Asaf Ali. During Vietnam War, the activities of this council increased for world peace. The Convention held at Helsinki (Finland) had special importance.

Pure, clean, virtuous, and vegetarian food has been the only permitted food of saints, meditators and the entire Namdhari Panth. It led towards animal protection and their welfare. Even if some other intellectuals organised conventions to create awareness about it, Namdhari Sikhs participated actively by considering it as their own responsibility. Sri Satguru Ji provided leadership to

international Vegetarian organisation. He offered food and remained active in the conventions.

In the 2nd half of sixties, some Namdhari families settled down in England migrated from East Africa. They made a reputation and got into work observing the rituals of *Bani*, dress code, turban and speech.

After the visit to Thailand, Singapore and Malaysia in 1966, Sri Satguru Ji gave *darshan* to the *Sadh Sangat* of UK on 27 August 1967. This was his first tour of western countries. He went to West Germany and Denmark to visit animal fairs. Looking carefully at a cow, he gave an estimate about the milk yield of that cow. The organisers were surprised to find that the estimate was absolutely correct. For them, it was no less than a miracle by a spiritual power. It led to a very useful discussion. Their good feelings towards the Namdhari Sikhs increased.

In 1971, the centenary of Hola festival by Guru Ram Singh at Anandpur was celebrated. Akali leader and Chief Minister of Punjab, S. Prakash Singh Badal specially participated in it. This was the centenary year of martyrdom of Namdhari Sikhs at Raikot, Amritsar and Ludhiana. Commemorations of these centenaries were started since the Hola festival itself.

Next year was the year of more action packed centenaries. It was the year of centenary of Martyrs of Malerkotla and centenary year of Sri Satguru Ji's exile. To commemorate these, centenaries a monthly *Shatabadi News* paper was published by S. Harvendra Singh Hanspal as its editor. Articles were published by contacting the entire media and gatherings were organized at various places. At Wolverhampton (UK) in Broadway Hall (Ealing), a memorial convention was held under the patronage of Sri Satguru Ji.

Mayor of Wolverhampton welcomed Sri Satguru Ji. Research based material was published and distributed.

In this year Hola Mahallas were held at two places. One was at Jagjit Nagar (Sirsa) and the other in Bangkok (Thailand), at the flats of Seth Piara Singh Narula. The objective was to propagate the anecdotes, tales and the fame of Guru Ram Singh at different places.

In 1973 Sri Satguru Ji blessed the beginning of Kar-sewa (cleaning of pond from mud) at Harimandar Sahib (Amritsar) with his followers. The entire community participated in it with great enthusiasm.

Since 60s, the inclination of Namdhari Sikhs towards education had increased. Their children started working for schools and colleges. Sri Satguru Ji organised *Vidyak* (educated) Jathas. Such conventions were held outside Punjab at Mandi (Himachal Pradesh), Delhi, Daltongunj (Bihar) and Jammu.

The family of Sant Jodh Singh of Daltongunj opened schools and colleges etc. Sant Jodh Singh started a girl's school which was later upgraded to college level in 1968. In 1974, Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Namdhari College and Balwant Singh Namdhari College were established in Palamu district.

In 1975, centenary of Suba Sahib Singh's death in prison in Hazaribagh, Bihar (now Jharkhand) was observed. Information based literature about him was printed and distributed and a congregation was held.

The vegetarian conventions were regularly held under the auspicious guidance of Sri Satguru Ji. Namdhari Sikhs were active in one of the local vegetarian organisation in England. This organization was not only vegetarian but advocated cultivating crops without the use of chemical fertilizers. Sri Satguru Ji also forbade use of chemical

fertilisers in fields. He Participated in the vegetarian conventions in the Hague (Holland) in 1971, Sweden in 1973 and Sri Lanka and Chicago (US) in 1975. This Organisation held congregation in India after every 10 years - 1957, 1967, 1977. After associating with this organisation, food used to be served by Sri Satguru Ji. Peace ambassador of Thailand, Dr Suchat came to Sri Bhaini Sahib on 25 November 1977. He came to present golden emblem, books, rosaries from the King of Thailand to the crusador of peace and vegetarianism, Sri Satguru Ji. In the same year General Secretary of Indian Vegetarian Congress Surinder Mehta along with representative of Nigeria visited the His Holiness for his *darshan*. Prior to that from 20 to 23 November 1976, 24th World Vegetarian Convention was held at Vigyan Bhawan, Delhi in which delegates of over 50 countries participated. They expressed their gratitude towards Sri Satguru Ji.

In 1976 the blessings of Sri Satguru Ji resulted in a miracle. The drought ridden U.K. got rainfall. This created deep faith towards Sri Satguru Ji and respect towards Namdhari Sikhs all over the world. The news papers highlighted Sri Satguru Ji as the 'Rain God'.

A statement by Water Chief Denis Howard was published in a newspaper in England on 26 August 1976 said that it was the worst ever drought in England and Wales in last 500 years. The following day on 27 August, Chairman National Water Council Lord Nuscent said that there was no chance of rain till September. The water level in river Thames was touching a new low. Restrictions were imposed on water usage.

Sri Satguru Ji reached England on 8th August 1976 on tour. He was welcomed by many organisations in Slough. Dr

Rahordan Lato, President International Vegetarian Society, former Mayor of Slough, leader of the council, leaders of the Indian league, Akali Dal and Namdhari *Sangat* were among those who welcomed Sri Satguru Ji. He was also welcomed by a joint organisation of Hindus, Sikhs, Muslims and Jews and inter-faith groups of Wolverhampton. He reached Southall on 26 August. *Naam-Simran* and *Kirtan* was organised at Mangat hall. The Hall owner maliciously put on a news item on BBC TV and radio that Namdhari Satguru Ji had come to England to make rain fall.

The Namdhari Sikhs were worried, that if it did not rain they would become a laughing stock. They requested about it to Satguru Ji who said that it was only within the reach of Almighty. But a miracle happened. On 27th August 1976, with his grace, after Pandit Gopal Singh conducted the *ardas* with humility, defying all forecasts it rained heavily, flooding the area. It soothed the hearts of the Sikhs. Evening newspapers of 27 August and morning newspapers of 28 August, Saturday praised Sri Satguru Ji in their columns by publishing news items and photographs.

In the same year, Sri Satguru Ji started the *Kar Sewa* from Ramsar in order to give a face lift to Sri Bhaini Sahib.

Namdhari artists started a new revolution in the field of music. For teaching music and for its practice, Sri Satguru Ji put Namdhari children as disciples of top musicians. S. Gurdev Singh, Harbhajan Singh were among the students of Ustad Amjad Ali Khan. Ustad Amjad Ali Khan had *darshan* of Sri Satguru Ji in 1966. Besides this, they got training in playing on Santoor, Sitar, Sarod, Tabla and Flute and learnt dance from Pandit Shiv Kumar, Ustad Vilayat Khan, Pandit Ram Narain, Pandit Kishan Maharaj, Imrat Khan, Pandit Samata Prasad, Sri Hari Prasad Chaurasia and Pandit Birju

Maharaj. At Sri Bhaini Sahib *Namdhari Kala Kendra* was established. Sri Satguru Ji is master of masters. He composed 14.25, 14.75, 16.5 and other difficult tunes and *tals* and guided others to practice singing of these compositions.

Amongst the classical and Gurmat performers trained at Sri Bhaini Sahib under the direct supervision of Sri Satguru Ji, Ragi Baljit Singh was conferred, Shiromani Ragi Award in 2004 by the Department of Languages, Government of Punjab. Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi chose Baljit Singh to be the best Ragi of the year 2005 and awarded him Shiromani Ragi Award. In 2012 another gem of Sri Satguru Ji, Ustad Harbhajan Singh glittered as Sangeet Natak Academy of India bestowed upon him the Gurmat Sangeet Award. Dr. Mohammad Hamid Ansari, Hon'ble Vice-President of India presented him the award.

In the field of Gurmat and Classical Sangeet the master of the master's Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji was conferred with Tagore Fellowship of Sangeet by Sangeet Natak Academy, Government of India in 2012, which Sri Satguru Ji accepted with holy grace. But it could not be presented to him due to his sagging health. What a cruel joke of destiny ! Before he could formally accept this honour, he left for his heavenly abode.

Satguru Partap Singh Memorial Sangeet Sammelans (music concerts) were organised in Delhi, Mumbai, Aurangabad and Lucknow in which top musicians and artists participated. Chief Minister of UP Ram Naresh Yadav inaugurated the Sangeet Sammelan at Ravinderalaya Hall, Lucknow held from 2-6 February 1979.

In 1978, Sri Satguru Ji laid the foundation stone of World

International Peace Conference Hall in Bangkok. Heads of different religions across the world participated in it. Sri Satguru Ji praised the monastery of Dr Suchat, a symbol of Thailand World Peace, Vegetarianism and meditation by writing a letter in February, 1978 to him.

In a time span of about 20 years, following the guidance and blessings by Sri Satguru Ji, Namdhari Sikhs organised the community for preaching and its expansion and also earned recognition in new fields and new regions and opened new horizons to march forward.

ATTAINING NEW HEIGHTS

The Namdhari Sikhs started expanding their identity in different countries of the world. They established themselves in political arena along with other fields. In India, they were close to Congress because of old proximity on the political front and that's why they started playing an active role abroad in Overseas Congress as well.

Back home in 1977, Congress faced a severe blow when it lost elections to the Lok Sabha. Many people who were associated with it for a long time left it. Sri Satguru Ji consoled them that good days would come again and Namdhari Sikhs remained associated with the Congress led by Smt. Indira Gandhi. With the Congress returning to power in 1980, the Prime Minister considered it proper to be in closer touch with Namdhari Sikhs who stood by her in difficult times. In 1980, Congress elected Shri Harvendra Singh Hanspal, General Secretary Namdhari Darbar to the Rajya Sabha from Punjab. Although there were Namdhari members in the Lok Sabha, Rajya Sabha and Vidhan Parishad earlier also, but Harvendra Singh Hanspal directly represented Sri Satguru Ji and Namdhari Panth. In 1981, he represented the nation in the United Nations Organisation along with some other MPs and participated in deliberations on all strategic issues. He gave distinct identity In Namdhari

attire about himself.

In the political field, Kartar Singh Sokhi used to win elections in Delhi by the grace of Sri Satguru Ji. Sant Pritam Singh, who had made his name in Jammu, completed his life's journey on 9 September 1977. S Sulakhan Singh continued as a member of Metropolitan Council and President of Delhi Sikh Gurudwara Management Committee. Prof. Inder Singh became active in Bihar and became a minister and later Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Jharkhand. At present in 2012, he is member of Lak Sabha. In the Panchayats of Haryana and Punjab, Namdhari Sikhs became *Panchs* and *Sarpanchs* and Chairmen of Block *Samitis*. With the blessings of Sri Satguru Ji, a big reception was arranged by the Namdhari Darbar, Sri Bhaini Sahib (Punjab) in honour of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi on 27 March 1981 at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi. Namdhari representatives from UK, Thailand, Kenya, USA alongwith prominent figures from home participated in the reception. Sri Satguru Ji blessed her. Smt Gandhi said that one should learn discipline, patriotism and fight against social evils, respect for women and ban on dowry from Namdhari Sikhs who believe in simple living, high thinking and are staunch patriots and are active since 1857.

To encourage women in the activities of *Panth*, *Istari Vidyak Jatha* was constituted in 1981 with the blessings of Sri Satguru Ji.

The Namdhari Sikhs started extending their operations beyond Punjab and Haryana in the field of agriculture. In Haryana alongwith other business fields, the land which was considered arid and desert was developed as orchards, besides cultivation of wheat, cotton, paddy, sugarcane etc. In these orchards not only were *Jujuba trees (berian)* but

orange and Kinu trees and grapes gave enough fruits for a good earning. Earlier this area was connected to Sirsa city only by pathways along canals and kutchra roads but now it has been connected by metallic roads. A network of roads, spread out even in villages, exists today and Sri Satguru Ji has played a major role in it.

The agriculturists bought land in Gola Gokaran Nath in Uttar Pradesh. They emphasized on meditation, *Maryada* and glorious history, besides strengthening the organization and to spread the message to layman, a big congregation was held at Hola Mahalla 1982 at Gola Gokarannath. It had very good impact.

In the same year special efforts were made to develop a farm near Bangalore (Karnataka). Sri Satguru Ji handed over the management of this 180 acre farm to Thakur Uday Singh in village Birdi. With the permission and blessings of Sri Satguru Ji, Thakur Ji planted mango trees in 40 acres, coconut in 40 acres and grapes and plants of other fruits and flowers in 5 acres. Sri Satguru Ji's teachings were to work hard, speak the truth, be honest and help the weak and the poor, wherever you live, keep on doing something for helping the poor and the down trodden of that area. Work hard. This advice, as guiding principle, proved fruitful.

In 1985 this farm was named as Namdhari Seeds. To push up production of this farm to business level, visits were undertaken to US, Europe and Asia. Outside India, branch offices were opened in America and Europe continents and in Japan, Thailand, Bangladesh, Jordan and Egypt. The work to improve the varieties of plants, seeds, seedlings, fruits, flowers etc. had begun. Sweet Tamarind, citron, grapes etc. plants and seeds were brought from abroad for higher yield.

'Namdhari Seeds' have brought name and fame in India and abroad by its products.

In the field of education, Guru Hari Singh college in Sri Jiwan Nagar, Satguru Partap Singh Academy in Sri Bhaini Sahib, Shaheed Bishan Singh Memorial School in Delhi, educational institutes of Mandi (Himachal Pradesh) earned their recognition and contributed towards a revolution in education to keep pace with the times. The actions taken in this context in Bihar had already been mentioned.

In the field of literature, 3rd World Punjabi Conference was held in Bangkok in 1983. Men of letters came to participate from all over the world. They had serious discussions regarding problems relating to Punjabi language, literature and culture. They praised the hospitality and support provided by Namdhari Sikhs and expressed gratitude to the Panth perceptor, Sri Satguru Ji.

From time to time, Sri Satguru Ji blessed reputed Punjabi authors Tara Singh Kamil, Navtej Singh, Santokh Singh Dhir, Kirpal Singh Kasel, Dr Harbhajan Singh and Sant Singh Sekhon, Dr. Maheep Singh, Harbhajan Singh Rattan and many more.

Alongwith the mouth piece of Namdhari Panth, *Satjug*, other papers *Wariam*, *Nirikhiak*, *Yug Maryada* and *Vartmaan Hindustan* had already started contributing as per their capability. For research in Namdhari history, Jaswinder Singh had resigned from government job in 1984 and was given the responsibility by Sri Satguru Ji to research thoroughly into old government files. He is in constant touch with National Archives.

The Hola Mohalla in 1984 was held at Birmingham (UK) to present the huge congregation of Namdhari Sikhs in a

foreign land. Besides the local *Sangat*, delegates from US, Canada, Germany, Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Thailand, India and several other countries participated in it in large numbers with great enthusiasm. The *Rahit Maryada* of Namdhari *Panth* got a boost.

To enhance the spiritual power, *Naam Simran* and meditation are stressed in *Maryada* for which *Jap Prayog* is organised for a month every year for *Naam Simran*, postponing all tours and staying at the same place for the whole month. Sri Satguru Ji preaches the methodology for meditation and way of living. He organised the Hola festival of 1985 in Dareslam (Tanzania). The Sikhs of nearby countries, who could not afford to come to India often, got a chance to participate in it and local Sikhs got a chance to express their ability towards *sewa* and service and in the management of the festival.

In 1986, Sri Satguru Ji organized *Jap Prayog* for the whole year instead of a month at Sri Bhaini Sahib. Thousands of Sikhs did meditation (*Simran*) for hundreds of thousands of hours with complete *Rahit Maryada*. Scripture reading and flow of religious discourses were continued as per programme schedule. Such exercises were meant for improving learning and understanding the meaning of the text. Satguru Partap Singh arranged 6,00,000 readings of Sri Adi Granth Sahib. Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji organised 1,25,000 Paths of Sri Adi Granth Sahib twice and their ceremonial closing and more are on way.

Namdhari musicians, children and artists performed *kirtan* with string instruments in pure classical form as per the tunes mentioned in the scriptures. This practice continues.

The ideals of *Rahit Maryada* of Sikhism were fully

followed by Sri Satguru Ji even during his bypass surgery. According to *Rahit Maryada* not a hair of body was to be cut. Medicines having a component of liquor were prohibited. Blood transfusion of any other person was not allowed. For purity of feelings, there should be no woman nurse. Head must not be uncovered; turban must always be put on. By agreeing to his above mentioned conditions, Dr I K Ross of Royal Adelaide Hospital, Australia performed his operation on 16 July 1991. Besides Satguru's family and his followers, Dr Narinderpal Singh of Thailand was present in his service. Operation was successful. Soon he started blessing *Sadh Sangat*. It was felt that the surgery at the age of 71 was a miracle of his spiritual power. During these days, Namdhari Sikhs from the entire world meditated on *naam* and offered prayers (Ardas) for his early recovery.

The year 1990-91 was birth centenary of Satguru Partap Singh. A centenary committee was constituted. Although it was celebrated in the entire Namdhari world with reverence by organising programmes at different places, information about Satguru Partap Singh life was disseminated by organising *Diwans* (religious congregations), *Katha-kirtan* were performed, *Naam Simran* was organised and ceremonial closing of the recitation from the holy scriptures was held. The main convention was held at Delhi in the form of a symposium. This convention was held at FICCI auditorium, Delhi in 1991 under the auspicious guidance of Sri Satguru Ji. Dr S. D. Sharma, Vice-President of India was the chief guest. Prominent writers read out papers and discussions were held about Sri Satguru Ji's life and works. That year many literary and poetic books about Sri Satguru Ji were published and released.

In 1992, Namdhari hockey eleven was at its peak. Wherever it played any match, it won cups and shields. Its glory increased further by winning Sanjay Gandhi Hockey Tournament that year. To encourage sports, Namdhari Sports Academy was established at Sri Bhaini Sahib. Sri Satguru Ji laid the foundation stone of a stadium in Sri Bhaini Sahib on 8th November 1992. Besides hockey, players and athletes avail facilities for badminton, athletics etc. Astroturf and a modern gymnasium have been built. Namdhari children are bringing name and fame in wrestling and body building also.

Sardara Singh a Namdhari hockey player is one of the most outstanding players in the game of Hockey. Another international player Harpal Singh has been adjudged as Gursikh hockey player and honoured by Shiromani Gurdwara Parbhandak Committee, Amritsar.

It was an honour for his contribution as renowned player of hockey, Sardar Singh was bestowed with Arjun Award. Shri Parnab Mukharjee, Hon'ble Presented of India presented the award on 29.01.2012 in Rashtrapati Bhawan. At present he is the Captain of India hockey team. He is considered as one of the best mid-fielders in Hockey at present in the world.

The young Dharmvir Singh Matharu from Bhilai won many gold medals in weight lifting and was also crowned Mr. Chattisgarh.

On 4-7 November 1991, directions were given for *Gurmat* preaching at Sri Bhaini Sahib. These conventions were organised in the coming years 1993, 1994 and 1996 also. Attendance and participation in these symbolised enthusiasm.

Namdhari seeds Pvt. Ltd Karnataka started publishing

Namdhari Samachar – a quarterly in English in 1992. Through it, they share their achievements and production, activities throughout the world and spread Namdhari ideals. A Similar job is being done by Namdhari Panth mouthpiece *Satjug*. Earlier this paper used to be published from Sri Jiwan Nagar (Haryana) from an ordinary press on simple paper by hand composing. Since 3rd December 1992, this weekly is published from Delhi. Its paper is better, computer setting and printing is done on offset press. This was appreciated and welcomed by readers and its circulation increased four fold. Its management was placed directly under Namdhari Darbar. Every year, issues with colour photos and annual special issues enabled it to become presentable to readers too. Prominent writers of Punjabi literary world started feeling proud by contributing in its publishing work. It is purely a mouthpiece of the *Panth* and not a business paper. No advertisements are published in it. With the help of this paper, the entire *Panth* maintains its association with each other by the grace of Sri Satguru Ji. It's most popular sections are Amrit Bachan of Satguru Partap Singh Ji and pious preachings of Satguru Jagjit Singh. Detailed reports about the visits of His Holiness are regularly published in it. His Holiness's tours to various places are for the betterment of the *Sadh Sangat*. Sri Satguru Ji undertook such lengthy tours that as on 21 February 1993, he covered an air journey of 66,000 miles in about 2 months. He visited UK, USA, Canada, Germany, Denmark and Scotland.

In 1993 on Hola festival, Sri Satguru Ji conferred the title of *Panth Bhushan* on Sh. Harvendra Singh Hanspal, General Secretary Namdhari Darbar. In the 4th World Punjabi Conference held at Delhi on 9th April 1994, Master Nihal Singh

President Namdhari Darbar was honoured for his services to the Punjabi language and literature.

Although Namdhari Sikhs sacrificed their lives in 1871-72 for the cause of downtrodden and the cow and for independence of the country, yet land allotment for their memorials eluded even after independence. It was a different matter that Namdhari Sikhs had always kept the memories of martyrs alive.

According to Sri Satguru Ji, the government undertakes good projects to earn appreciation from the people. Building of these memorials started in 1993. Prior to that, Kuka Shaheed Memorial Trust, under the presidency of its chairman S Beant Singh who was Chief Minister of Punjab was successful in removing obstructions in the way of building memorials. 6 acres of land was bought and 6.4 acre land was acquired on lease for memorial at Jamalpur, Malerkotla. 3802 yards of land was acquired for Ludhiana memorial and 1 *kanal* 14 *Marle* land for Amritsar memorial. In the convention held under the chairmanship of Chief Minister S Beant Singh, Sri Satguru Ji laid the foundation stone of Shaheedi Samarak on 24 June 1993 at Malerkotla. Over 50,000 Namdhari Sikhs from all over the world participated in this convention. In this huge gathering, Sri Satguru Ji's followers maintained complete discipline, for which they were applauded.

28th convention of *Vidyak Jatha* was held at Birdi (Karnatka) in 1993. A profound gratitude was expressed towards S Beant Singh for his special efforts in the raising of memorials. In this convention, a reward was conferred by Sri Satguru Ji on its former President S. Jagdish Singh Wariam for his tireless services.

Master Nihal Singh, Sant Ananta Singh, Suba Ganda Singh, Sant Wariam Singh Musavvar had already been honoured with the title *Panth Ratan*. *Gian Martand* was conferred on Pt. Gopal Singh and *Kav Bhushan* on Kavishar Jeevan Singh, Sant Mangal Singh was titled *Nishkam Sewak*. Among those working for *Vidyak Jatha* Sant Surinder Singh, Sant Dalip Singh and Sant Surjeet Singh Jeet (UK) were bestowed with 'Blessings reward'.

Women were conferred Sethani Mahinder Kaur Award. Jagdish Singh, Kirpal Singh Kasel, Atma Singh Sankhatra, Bishan Singh and some other writers were privileged with Taran Singh Vahimi Award for many years in a row.

A convention of *Vidyak Jatha* was held in Bangkok on 19-20 March 1993. The information about the raising of martyr's memorials was given in this convention.

In the same year, a big convention was held near the old prison in Ludhiana on 26 November 1993 to build a martyr's memorial under the chairmanship of S Beant Singh. Although these memorials were being raised by the government but due to emotional attachment Namdhari Sikhs considered it their privilege to contribute towards building of these memorials. To bring eminent personalities of Namdhari history to the notice of common man, special efforts were made to name roads and parks after them. For example, a south side road of Rashtrapati Bhawan was named as Mai (Suba) Hukmi Marg, road leading to Zakhira from Mayapuri in Delhi was named Satguru Ram Singh Marg, Road leading to Sri Bhaini Sahib from Ludhiana-Samrala crossing is Satguru Ram Singh Marg, Satguru Ram Singh Marg in Yamuna Nagar, Satguru Partap Singh chowk in Ludhiana, Ludhiana-Malerkotla-Khanna road is named Namdhari Shaheedi Marg,

Road leading to Ludhiana Shaheedi Samarak named Kuka Shaheedi Marg and Malerkotla Namdhari Shaheed Girls College etc.

On 3-6 February 1994, the spiritual leader of Radhaswami sect Maharaj Rajinder Singh organised 7th World Religious Conference in which Buddhist head Dalai Lama, Jain Acharya Sushil Muni, Maulana Ji and Father of Church participated. By agreeing to the request of organizers, Sri Satguru Ji graced the occasion by his presence and exchanged views on the righteous path for humanity.

Similarly on 20 November 1994 Sri Satguru Ji came especially from Bangkok for the religious felicitation of Acharya Sri Padam Sagar Surishwar Ji. In Bangkok, Thailand's Deputy Prime Minister Major General Chamlong sought the blessings of Sri Satguru Ji. He praised the role of religious minded Namdhari Sikhs of Thailand.

How Sri Satguru Ji undertook extensive tours for the spiritual guidance of the Namdhari Sikhs can be gauged from the statistics of 1994:

By train	632 Km
By Car	48,956 Km
By air	69,683Km
Total Travel	1,19,271 Km

(Data provided by Rachhpal Singh Sewak)

This comes out to, on an average, 326 kilometres of travel daily to participate in functions and visiting the followers to grace them with *darshan*.

In the World Sikh Convention, on 25 September 1995, 11 Namdhari Sikhs were honoured by S. Gurcharan Singh Tohra, President of Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak

Committee Amritsar (Punjab). Among them were the descendents of martyr's families, Subas, Journalists, teachers and preachers. In this gathering Singh Sahib Yogi Harbhajan Singh Khalsa who had come from USA, praised the sacrifices and spirit of Sikhism of Namdhari Sikhs. He was an admirer of Sri Satguru Ji.

This association with the committee was further strengthened, when in 1996, S. Jaswinder Singh, a scholar in Namdhari history was nominated as the member of the Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee. He had visited Myanmar (Burma) many a times with the permission of Sri Satguru Ji and collected information about the places of detention of Satguru Ram Singh and Subas in Myanmar. On the basis of these in June 2000, a group of scholars, namely S. Jaswinder Singh, S. Surjeet Singh Jeet and Tara Singh Anjan, led by Surinder Singh Namdhari and Ajit Singh Namdhari visited Myanmar and discussed the matter with the Government officials and Indian embassy representatives.

The establishment of Satguru Ram Singh Chair in Sampooranand Sanskrit Vishwavidyala Varanasi (UP) in 1996 was a leap forward in academics. In 1997 in the presence of Sri Satguru Ji, over 200 scholars of Vedic tradition participated in the Guru Eulogy.

On 19-21 July 1997, World Punjabi Conference was held at Wisconsin University, Milwaukee (USA), which was inaugurated by Sri Satguru Ji. He said on the occasion that, "All should come after daily prayer for the success of the conference." Sri Satguru Ji visited the home of Ustad Vilayat Ali Khan in U.S. For Ustad Vilayat Khan it was a special occasion.

From there, the Sri Satguru ji reached UK on 28 July at

the invitation of Lord Swaraj Paul and visited House of Lords. A great honour was bestowed on him and he was welcomed at the main office of British Parliament. After that he went to see Parliament session. It was the same parliament which had endorsed the exile of Satguru Ram Singh 110 years ago which honoured His Holiness, Sri Satguru Ji.

During this tour, the reception given to him at Swami Narayan Temple on 3rd August was quite significant. This temple is the specimen of Indian Building architecture. It is made of 4,828 tons of marble. A red carpet welcome was accorded to Sri Satguru Ji. The *mahant* of the temple Swami Atam Swaroop said, "a complete pilgrimage had blessed that place and it was their good luck that they were blessed." This temple belonged to an organization of Gujarat, followers of embodied Guru Pramukh Swami Ji.

The Namdhari Sikhs of Thailand made efforts to build their own school by taking permission from education department of Thailand government. Sri Satguru Ji inaugurated the school on 24 August 1997. It was named Modern International School, Bangkok. It is affiliated to London University. Besides other subjects, Punjabi is taught.

Third centenary of Khalsa was celebrated throughout the year 1999. For its celebrations, a *Chetna March* was organised on 28 March 1999 from Sri Bhaini Sahib to Sri Anandpur Sahib by Namdhari Sant Khalsa under the patronage of Sri Satguru Ji. There were about 1000 motorcycles, scooters, cars, trucks, tractors and buses. This caravan was 35 km. long and 125 welcome gates were erected enroute. Throughout the entire journey, *Sangat* from villages and cities stood on both sides of the roads to welcome the procession.

Chief Minister of Punjab, S. Prakash Singh Badal was present at Anadpur Sahib along with other leaders to greet the Namdhari procession. On reaching Takhat Sri Kesgarh Sahib, Head Granthi Giani Tarlochan Singh presented a *Siropa* (robe of Honour) to Sri Satguru Ji.

In the same year, Namdhari Sikhs participated in the *kar sewa* of Durgiana Temple under the auspicious guidance of Sri Satguru Ji. Besides, Sri Satguru Ji visited Bangkok to inaugurate 33rd World Vegetarian Conference.

Establishment of Namdhari Guru Ram Singh Chair in Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar was another land mark. Prof. Satinder Singh was appointed its first head and Prof. Joginder Singh is its present Head.

The Council for Parliament of World Religions was held at Cape Town (South Africa). From 1 to 8 December 1999 in which nearly 40 meetings were organised daily to enable different religious bodies to represent their faith. Namdhari Sikhs under the chairmanship of Shri Harvendra Singh Hanspal, President and Jagdish Singh Waryam, General Secretary of the Namdhari Darbar had already reached there to participate. Suba Satnam Singh from Kenya and President of Namdhari Sangat Satwant Singh Palrey from Tanzania were already there, along with their companions for making advance arrangements. Participation of Namdhari Panth was appreciated.

In 2000, from 28-31 August a Millennium World Peace Summit of religious and spiritual leaders was held by World Council of Religious leaders at UN assembly hall, New York. The Namdhari Sikhs participated in this summit under the guidance of Sri Satguru Ji. He told the Summit that the key to World Peace was animal protection, for which vegetarianism

must be adopted. He spoke in Punjabi in the assembly hall. Surinder Singh Manchanda, as desired by His Holiness, met summit General Secretary and apprised him of the salient features of Namdhari Sikhs and their role in the world peace and harmony. To carry on the tradition, the council's founding meeting was scheduled at Bangkok (Thailand) from 12-14 June 2002. Shri Harvendra Singh Hanspal and Tara Singh Anjan participated on behalf of Namdhari Panth. Local *Sangat* gave an outstanding support. This was another successful international religious gathering of the Council.

The Namdhari Sikhs while projecting their identity by establishing their own religious centres, colleges, schools, farms, business houses at many places changed the face of their main religious centre, Sri Bhaini Sahib also. Earlier there were *Katcha* houses and a *katcha* Sarovar. Now every building is a concrete one. The water in the *Sarovar* is as deep as from a natural source. Large *Diwan* and *Langar* halls have been constructed. *Mandir* has been rebuilt. Old age home and hospitals have also been constructed.

In Ramsar Complex, one can see and enjoy Satguru Ram Singh Miniature Park. It glorifies the history of Kuka Movement with the display of historical events in miniature size and one can listen to the recorded history through taped commentary.

However along with physical achievements, Sikhism has also been strengthened. A continuous *Akhand Varni* of *Naam Simran* is going on. Outside Sri Bhaini Sahib there are 19 places in Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, UP, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Karnataka, Bihar, Jharkhand, Delhi and abroad in Bangkok (Thailand) where *Akhand varni* is going on.

In Ludhiana, under the supervision of Thakur Uday Singh, an eight storeyed Satguru Partap Singh Apollo Hospital with modern amenities has come up. Constructed at a cost of rupees 100 crore, the hospital was opened for the patients by Sri Satguru ji on the occasion of Hola Mohalla in 2005. Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh inaugurated it on 23rd September, 2005 in the presence of Sri Satguru ji. Punjab Chief Minister Capt. Amrinder Singh presided over the function. Speaking on the occasion, the Prime Minister said the hospital would greatly benefit in the treatment of the patients and hoped that Punjab would be able to solve the drinking water and environment problems.

The Namdhari Sikhs have made strides in the political field also. Important among them are Shri Harvendra Singh Hanspal, being President of Punjab Pradesh Congress Committee.

He has been a member of the National Commission for Minorities, Government of India. Prof. Inder Singh Namdhari was speaker of Jharkhand Assembly and in 2009. He was an elected Member of Parliament as an independent candidate from Chhatra (Jharkhand).

The weekly *Satjug* presented *Panthic* activities in the literary and historical perspective and came out with special *Basant* issues. Khalsa tri-centenary issue in 1999, 40 years of Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji on *Gurgaddi* in 2000, 80 years of Satjug in 2001, Historical material in 2002, Namdhari Writers special issue in 2003, Historical Centenaries issue in 2004 and *Gurgaddi* Centenary issue in 2006 etc. were brought out. These special issues are usually released at the Hola Mohalla.

Annual issues of SATJUG WEEKLY of 2009 and 2010

were dedicated to the celebrations of completing 50 years of Gurgaddi Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji. Annual issue 2011 highlighted information and history of Sri Bhaini Sahib (Punjab) and 2012 Annual issue as Basant Ank.

Significant advancement has been made in the field of publication of Namdhari history and literature. Over 100 years old Satguru Ram Singh *Hukumname* and Sant Santokh Singh's *Satguru Bilas* were published by the Namdhari Darbar. Footnotes were given, where ever needed. The task of editing and compiling was done by Jaswinder Singh. Satguru Partap Singh discourses "Lal Eh Ratan" and discourses of Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji "*Pravachan*" were published with the efforts of Bibi Beant Kaur and S. Harvendra Singh Hanspal. Writings of many other writers have been published. For special contribution in the field of literature, Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji blessed Shri Pritam Singh Kavi by conferring on him the titles of *Sahit Ratan* in 2001 and Shri Amar Bharti by conferring on him *Sahit Martand* title in 2004.

In the field of literature, a large volume 'History Sant Khalsa – Part-I by Prof. Kirpal Singh Kasel in Punjabi published in 2006 and some other literary and historical publications came out. With the efforts of Shri Taranjit Singh, a documentary on Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh ji 'Roop Rab Da' was prepared and a CD was also released. A set of MP3 CDs on Sri Adi Garanth by Master Darshan Singh and Kirpal Singh Channa was presented to Sri Satguru ji in 2008. Leading luminaries in the field of Education, literature and Panthak preachings were honoured with Shaheed Baba Lahina Singh Memorial Award.

The 150th anniversary celebrations of Kuka Movement

were inaugurated on 12th April 2007 by Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh ji by hoisting the flag from the same platform at Sri Bhaini Sahib, Ludhiana where 150 years ago Satguru Ram Singh had given green signal to the Independence Movement by hoisting the flag. The governments of Punjab, Haryana and the Central government have shown special interest in this regard. They had brought out invitation cards, information bulletins, calendars and books, etc. on Namdhari history and have shown special interest in organizing functions.

Guru Nanak Dev University, Punjabi University, Kurushetra University, Punjab Agricultural University, Punjab University, Language Departments of Punjab and Haryana governments and several other organizations held symposia to propagate the Namdhari sect. The Namdhari Sikhs organize special functions at various places within the country and abroad to highlight the 150 years of Naamdhari history.

In 2008, two prominent figures of Namdhari sect left for their heavenly abode. The great preacher, Pt. Gopal Singh shed his physical existence on 11th June, 2008 and the younger son of Satguru Partap Singh and Satguru Jagjit Singh's brother Maharaj Bir Singh on 11th October, 2008. A large number of functions were organized in their memory under the patronage of Satguru Jagjit Singh ji.

The Punjabi Academy of Haryana government has set up Sant Taran Singh Vahimi Literary Award in 2007 which is given away every year to a litterateur for excellence in Punjabi literature. The 2008 Sant Taran Singh Vahimi Literary Award was conferred on Master Amrik Singh.

In 2012 S. Jagdish Singh Wariam was honoured as a prominent journalist. He was presented the Shiromani Patrakar Puskar by department of Languages, Government

of Punjab for his invaluable contribution to the Punjabi journalism for last 38 years.

A book named 'Parm Partapi Pratimavali' compiled by S. Harjinder Singh Kanwal, was published in 2011. It contains more than 400 rare and lively photographs of Satguru Partap Singh Ji. It is a world class publication.

To enrich Punjabi literature Master Amrik Singh was awarded Haryana Punjabi Gaurav Purskar in 2010 by Haryana Punjabi Sahit Academy, Government of Haryana.

In Delhi, Punjabi Academy Delhi, with the support of Government of India, displayed a vibrant multi-media programme 'Gatha Kuka Lehar' at Ferozshah Kotia Grounds for three days.

The adjoining area of Sri Jiwan Nagar (Haryana) had suffered a lot because of floods in Ghaghar river. Mata Chand Kaur Ji, wife of Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji, with his kind permission, went to help the people of the affected areas. She helped the needy, irrespective of caste colour or creed.

Portrait of Satguru Ram Singh Ji, the pioneer freedom fighter, was unveiled in Central Hall of Indian Parliament in December 2008 by Lok Sabha Speaker Sh. Som Nath Chatterjee. Dr. Manmohan Singh, Prime Minister of India. Dr. Mohammad Hamid Ansari, Vice President of India, Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji and many other political and social leaders graced the occasion. The portrait has been installed in the library of Parliament.

There was another step to recognize and honour the contribution of Kuka Movement. In 2012 Sh. P. Chidambaram, the Finance Minister of India, in Conference Hall of his ministry, released commemorative coins of Satguru Ram Singh Ji.

He presented its first set to Mata Chand Kaur wife of Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji. On one side of the coins is the portrait of Satguru Ram Singh and on the other inscribed : "150 years of Kuka Movement 1857-2007 commemorative coin."

The coins are Rs. 100 and Rs. 5 Denominations.

Learned persons were of the view that it was the second time that coins with the name of a Satguru had been released for circulation. First time it was done by Baba Banda Bahadur in 18th century and second time it has been released in 21st century by the Government of Dr. Manmohan Singh, Hon'ble Prime Minister of India.

As mentioned earlier, Sri Satguru Ji could not accept the Fellowship of Sangeet Natak Academy due to health problems.

The health of Sri Satguru Ji was going down day to day, Namdhari Sikhs all over the world offered prayers, meditated, performed Havan Yajnas, for the improvement of his health. In 2010 AD as per direction of Mata Chand Kaur Ji, with full Rahit Maryada, 2,12,500 Chandi-Di-Var and 2,55,010 Chaupai, paths were recited.

In 2012, Namdhari Sikhs performed 202 Akhand Paths of Sri Adi Granth Sahib (continuous reading of Holy Sikh Scripture) in addition to 201 paths. With full Such-Sodh-Maryada as per Namdhari code of conduct.

Doctors were also trying their level best, but Sri Satguru Ji was not gaining good health, though spiritually and psychologically he was in high spirits. The followers, who used to come to pay respects to him, felt that when he was looking towards them or indicating to them, they felt highly blessed.

On 13th November 2012, Tuesday, on the festival of Diwali the Namdhari Sikhs came from far and near to Sri Bhaini Sahib to have a darshan (look) of Satguru Ji and pay respects to him but they could not do so due to falling health. Shri Jagdish Singh had come to present Satguru Jagjit Singh Vishesh Ank (special issue of Wariam monthly), he was waiting with his family and friends at the Kothi (residence) of Satguru Jagjit Singh. He along with Mr. Anjan was permitted to present the magazine. So they did.

The health of Satguru Ji became critical and, he had to be admitted in Satguru Partap Singh Apollo Hospital, Ludhiana (Punjab) on 19th November 2012. Mata Chand Kaur, Sri Uday Singh, Sant Jagtar Singh, Biba Sahib Kaur, Sant Jai Singh and his personal attendants were there with him. He was admitted in ICU in a special room due to severe infection in the lungs. No one was allowed to visit him.

The condition on 19th, 23rd November 3rd and 5th December 2012 was very critical. But from 9 to 11 December 2012, a lot of improvement was seen. Doctors opined, if the improvement continues, he might be discharged from the hospital in few days, but it did not happen.

On 13th December 2012, Thursday at 6:28 PM just after the sun set, Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji left for his heavenly abode. His body was brought to Sri Bhaini Sahib for last rites. The news of his departure from the planet earth spread like wild fire in all the continents through phones, print and electronic media. Government of Punjab declared 14th December 2012 as special holiday in respect and regard for the departed holy soul of Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji. All the Government offices, Corporations and educational institutions remained close.

In the evening of 14th his body was put on funeral pyre. As per rituals, Jai Singh, his grandson, (son of his daughter Biba Sahib Kaur) lit funeral pyre. As per the wishes of Sri Satguru Ji and permission of Mata Chand Kaur it was announced that from now onwards Sri Uday Singh will take over the responsibilities of Namdhari sect.

On 23rd December 2012 in a mammoth gathering, homages were paid to Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji and Satguru Uday Singh was offered Panthak Dastar. Shri Pawan Kumar Bansal Railway Minister, Government of India, S. Parkash Singh Badal, Chief Minister, Punjab, other ministers, political social leaders, heads of the religious sects and Sadhu Samaj expressed their feelings on this occasion. It was rightly expressed that though Satguru Ji's demise has left a spiritual void which is difficult to fill, but it is prayed that with his blessings his successor Satguru Uday Singh would surmount all the challenges. The gathering at the function was considered to be over one and half lac.

13th December 2012 was the day of end of era of Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji and with the sun-rise of Satguru Uday Singh Ji a new era had begun.

Briefly speaking the Namdhari Sikhs under the guidance of their spiritual master have made a mark in the field of sports, academics, devotional music and spiritualism. Their contribution in the national struggle for 90 years before independence has always been recognised and appreciated as Kuka Movement. They showed their acumen in the onerous task of rehabilitation of the displaced persons after independence, strengthened their organizational structure and achieved new heights.

Sri Satguru ji has always been their centre of attraction who guides the *Sadh Sangat* in times of distress. The Namdhari History is glowing with the contributions of its great gurus.

RELEVANCE OF NAMDHARI PRINCIPLES

The concept of *Naam* is central to Namdhari *Maryada*. It implies the worship of the Almighty God alone. Meditation of *naam* leads to mental peace and spiritual contentment as it liberates the human being from the greed of material comforts. Millions of people take right or false means to earn wealth and enjoy worldly comforts. A large chunk of such wealth goes into false means of contentment and happiness and they take narcotics and intoxicants. They approach God-men and women popularly known as Mahatamas, Swamis, Bapus, Babas, Guru Matas, Sants and Sages etc. in search of mental peace. They listen to the discourses of these people. But without the meditation of *naam*, all other means are false and lead to only temporary solace.

In such a situation, they are attracted to religious TV channels. Millions of people in the East and West are turning religious minded. Here lies the relevance of taking *Naam* which is the nectar and an invaluable treasure of life.

You cannot have *naam* on your own. It is *Gurmantar*. *Mantar* is received from the Guru alone. There cannot be two opinions about the Guru that he takes the worldly shape on his own. One cannot acquire *naam* on its own. It is *gurmantara*, a *mantar* given by the Guru who is the

manifestation of the Almighty Himself. Since The *Bani* is revealed through the Guru, therefore, the Almighty and the Guru are the two sides of the same coin. (Gur Rasna Amrit Boldi Hari Naam Suhavi).

The tradition of living Guru in the Sikh Panth was set forth by Guru Nanak Dev himself and was continued by his successors even when the fifth Guru, Guru Arjan Dev compiled Sri Adi Granth Sahib. Rest of the five successors occupied the status of embodied Guru. Every religious place has its traditions of worship, be it a temple, a mosque, a monastery or a church. Everywhere, there is a preacher. The Sikh Panth has its Gurudwaras. One secton of the Sikhs believe in Guru Granth Sahib as the Guru and the other believes in embodied Guru. The importance of Sikh Guru can be gauged from the fact that whichever place the Sikh Gurus visited, gurdwaras have been built there in their memory. They are historically important because of the personal visits of the embodied Gurus. There is ample evidence in *Bani* signifying the embodied Guru. However, there is a major section of the Sikhs who believe in the concept of "*Shabad Guru, Bani Guru.*" but still they bow before the Saints and *Babas*.

The relevance of Namdhari *maryada* is that the Namdhari Sikhs believe in living Guru and address him as Satguru. Present Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh ji exhorts the Namdhari Sikhs to lead their life according to *gurbani*. Historical places have importance for the Sikhs. For Namdhari Sikhs-Raiyan, Sri Bhaini Sahib, Amritsar, Raikot, Malerkotla, Sri Jiwan Nagar are also places of importance. However for them the most important place is where Sri Satguru Ji is present. A glimpse of the Guru is pilgrimage for

them. Relevance of the preceptor and guide is eternal. There is no substitute to his guidance.

The Namdhari Sikhs follow the *Rahit Maryada* enunciated by the Satguru. This *maryada* is important in their daily life as it makes their life comfortable.

In the Sikh world today, the emphasis is to make the Sikhs *Amritdhari*. The Namdhari sikhs have made this *maryada* a part of their life. Every Namdhari Sikh is *Amritdhari*. Not only men are to be *Amridharis* but it is mandatory for women also to be *Amridharis*. After delivery, on the ceremony of resuming the household work, *amrit* is administered to women, along with the newborn baby. *Amrit* is administered to the couple at the time of marriage. Whosoever becomes *Amridhari*, must keep 5 Kakars. (*Kesh, Kangha, Kara, Kirpan and kachhehra*).

Namdhari *Maryada* emphasises on cleanliness and purity; they take bath from head to toe; using water gathered from natural sources. Keeping *gadwa* of water (iron vessal) is a symbol of true Namdhari Sikh.

Being the true adherents of *Gurmat*, Namdhari Sikhs are vegetarian and lead a pious life and take intoxicant free food. They always believe in the verse of Kabir who says that both *Jhatka* and *halal* are bad as they destroy piety in human being. Scientifically also, eating meat exposes the human beings to diseases from which the animal suffers.

Moreover, ecological balance of nature is disturbed by animal slaughter. Cousequently some species are on the verge of extinction and some have already become extinct. The researchers of health sciences have also found that vegetarian food is better than non-vegetarian. It is beneficial

for health, cheaper and free from diseases. That's why people, even in western countries, are turning to vegetarianism.

No religion permits intoxicants because their use leads to physical and mental weakness. Every intoxicant – poppy, bhang, opium, liquor, charas, ganja, hashish, smack, brown-sugar etc. harm the human body. Intoxicants hit family finances and result in social tensions. They make people addicts and vicious. Campaigns are launched against these vices. The government has opened departments for de-addiction.

Virtuous conduct and moral values emphasised by the Namdhari *Maryada* have their own relevance and greatly help the people contain lust, anger, greed, and ego at arm's length and help in leading a simple life. Similarly, emphasis of *Maryada* on morality saves people from being infected with diseases like AIDS. There is now growing awareness about AIDS and anti social physical contacts.

The Namdhari Sikhs stick to the principles of respect for women, her education and to save her from the slur of dowry. They don't indulge in foeticide. This has now become the need of the hour. Today, a baby girl is killed not after birth, but even before birth (female foeticide) by abortion. As a result, sex ratio has become uneven. To stop it, laws are being enacted and social awareness is being created. That's how Namdhari principles are becoming a movement for social reforms.

Relatively speaking, the process of disintegration of joint-family system and neglect of elders in the family is negligible in Namdhari community. Despite being settled in far off places and in foreign countries, the Namdhari Sikhs are united with their roots, traditions and *Maryada* back home. Sri

Satguru Ji, being their spiritual guide and social perceptor, unites them. He imbibes in them spiritual, social and cultural values. He also tries to prevail upon Non-resident Indian Namdhari Sikhs to remain attached to their elders and to their roots in India.

The relevance of Namdhari attire is their distinct identity. Their white clothes and straight turban symbolises high morals, truth and purity - a virtuous life free from fraud, deceit, cheating and lying.

The Namdhari Sikhs are taught to respect and honour 'others'. They are also taught to care for the family, the sect, country, humanity and above all the animal world and flora and fauna. An awareness is being generated about it through out the world. This leads to an intent for peace, cooperation, friendship and nearness which gives rise to the feelings of 'Live and Let Live'. It inspires for world peace and holding summits for the purpose.

Above all, Namdhari Sikhs are taught by their Satguru to oppose terrorism in any form and stand for world peace. The Namdhari *Maryada* and traditions are more relevant for the world today as ever before. They are relevant to end the negative approach and to inculcate positive feelings in humankind as these lead to lessening of tensions. Jealousy and dejection are removed and the human soul becomes pure by recitation of *Naam* and remaining in *Maryada*. Not only the Sikh Panth but also the entire world can benefit from it.



The concept of *Naam* is central to Namdhari *Maryada*. It implies the worship of the Almighty God alone. Meditation of *naam* leads to mental peace and spiritual contentment as it liberates the human being from the greed of material comforts.

Briefly speaking the Namdhari Sikhs under the guidance of their spiritual master have made a mark in the field of sports, academics, devotional music and spiritualism. Their contribution in the national struggle for 90 years before independence has always been recognised and appreciated as Kuka Move-ment.



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